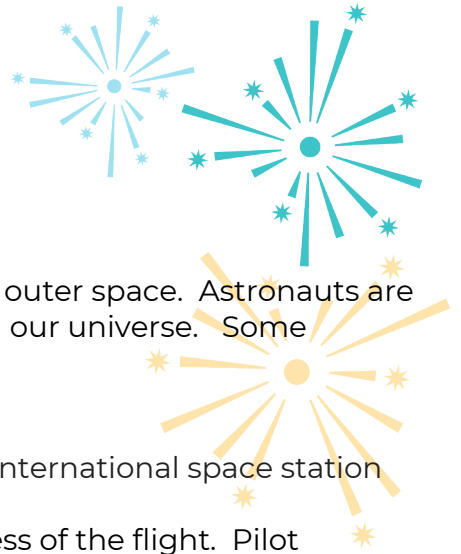


CAREER BRIEF

(Grades 3 - 5)

ASTRONAUT



WHAT IS AN ASTRONAUT?

An astronaut is a space adventurer who travels, works and learns about outer space. Astronauts are scientists who explore and navigate space so we can better understand our universe. Some astronauts are pilots or mission specialists.

WHAT DO ASTRONAUTS DO?

- Pilot Astronauts are the commanders of their space shuttle and international space station while in space.
- Pilot Astronauts are responsible for the overall mission and success of the flight. Pilot Astronauts are also responsible for leading their crew and ensuring their safety.
- Mission Specialist Astronauts work with pilots to complete experiments, manage and maintain spacecraft equipment and launch satellites.

Fun Fact: Did you know that astronauts are called different names in different countries? In Russia astronauts are called “Cosmonauts”, in China they’re called “Taikonauts” and in France they go by “Spationautes”.

EDUCATION

- A bachelor’s degree in engineering, science or math is required
- Mission Specialists are required to have 3 or more years in graduate school such as a master’s degree or a doctoral degree.

TRAINING

- NASA requires 20 months of training, including time spent in a low-gravity aircraft known as the Vomit Comet!
- Astronauts need to be able to pass a strict physical examination.

SKILLS

- Must get used to weightlessness.
- Leadership, communication & multi-tasking skills.
- Experience in piloting a jet aircraft.
- Experience with science experiments.