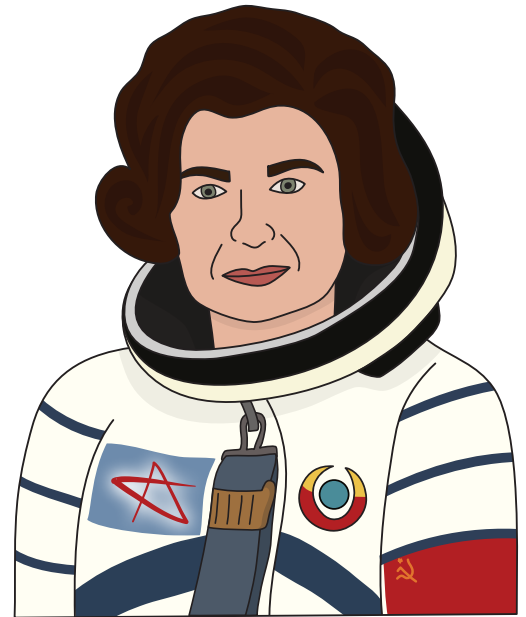


# THE FIRST WOMAN IN SPACE

## VALENTINA TERESHKOVA

Valentina Tereshkova was born on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1937 in the village of Maslennikovo in Russia (the Soviet Union or USSR at the time). Her father was a tank driver who died during WW2 when she was 2 years old. After his death, Valentina's mother moved the family to the city of Yaroslavl where there were better employment opportunities. After school, Valentina Tereshkova got a job as a textile worker and enjoyed skydiving in her free time.



The United States of America and the Soviet Union had been involved in a race to achieve landmarks in space exploration. The Soviets realised that the Americans were training female astronauts so put plans in place to win the race to put a woman into space.

|                                                                                     |                                                                           |                    |
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|  | Sputnik 1 the first earth orbiting satellite.                             | 4th October 1957   |
|  | Laika the dog, first animal to orbit earth on Sputnik 2.                  | 3rd November 1957  |
|  | Explorer 1 the first US satellite to orbit earth.                         | 31st January 1958  |
|  | Ham, a US chimpanzee, the first great ape in space.                       | 31st January 1961  |
|  | Yuri Gagarin first human in space.                                        | 12th April 1961    |
|  | Alan Shepard first American in space.                                     | 5th May 1961       |
|  | Valentina Tereshkova first woman in space.                                | 16th June 1963     |
|  | Alexei Leonov first person to leave a spacecraft and conduct a spacewalk. | 18th March 1965    |
|  | Apollo 8 becomes the first spacecraft to orbit the moon.                  | 21st December 1968 |
|  | Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin become first people to walk on the moon.   | 20th July 1969     |

Due to her parachuting skills, Valentina Tereshkova applied for and was selected to train as a cosmonaut. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 1962, she was chosen along with four other women to join the female cosmonaut corps. After several months of training, Tereshkova was chosen to be the one who would take the flight into space.

On the morning of the flight, Valentina Tereshkova travelled by bus to the launch site. At the very first launch, Yuri Gagarin had stopped the bus to use the toilet and had done a wee on the back wheel of the bus. This became a tradition carried out by every cosmonaut since. Valentina Tereshkova continued this ritual, weeing on the back tyre when she arrived at Vostok 6, the spacecraft that would take her into space.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1963, Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to travel into space. At just 26 years old she was and still is the youngest woman to go into space. She is also the only woman ever to fly solo in



Valentina Tereshkova on a postal stamp



Statue of Valentina Tereshkova

space. During her flight, she orbited the earth 48 times and spent 2 days, 22 hours, and 50 mins in space. At the end of the mission, she ejected from her capsule about 4 miles above the earth's surface and parachuted safely to the ground.

# *THE FIRST WOMAN IN SPACE*

## **VALENTINA TERESHKOVA**

1. When and where was Valentina Tereshkova born?

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2. What was Valentina Tereshkova's hobby?

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3. Explain why the Soviets (Russians) wanted to send a woman into space?

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4. Who was the first person to go into space?

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5. Americans who went into space were called \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Soviets who went into space were called \_\_\_\_\_.

7. What was the name of Valentina Tereshkova's spacecraft?

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8. How old was Valentina Tereshkova when she orbited the earth?

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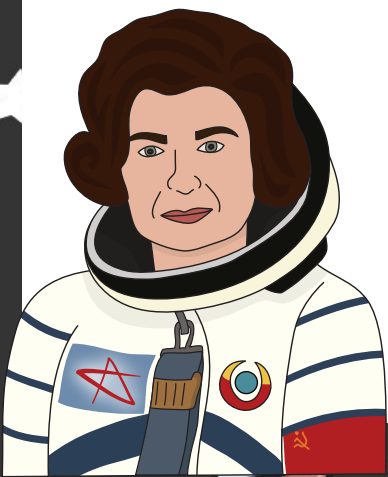
9. How did Valentina Tereshkova's hobby come in handy when she returned to earth?

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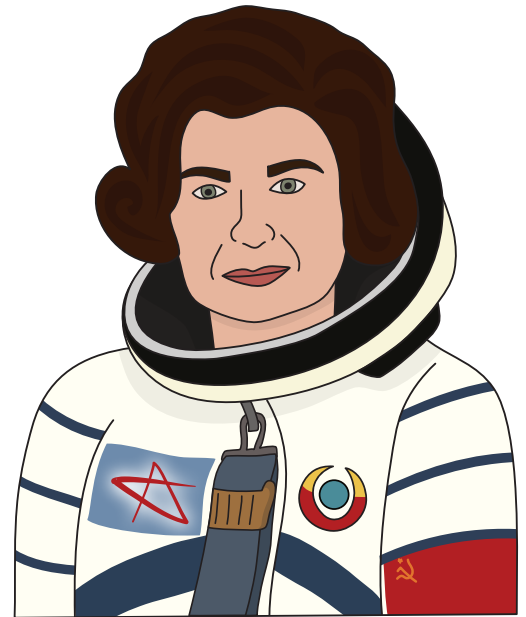
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