

The First Lunar Landing

Apollo 11 was the first manned spaceflight (headed by Neil Armstrong) to land on the moon. Two American astronauts became the first humans to walk on the lunar surface after their lunar module called 'Eagle' landed at Tranquillity Base in July 1969. As Armstrong was descending from Eagle's ladder and his foot touched the moon's surface, he famously announced, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

He was soon joined by another astronaut, Buzz Aldrin, who, dazzled by the landscape, proclaimed it to be a "magnificent desolation". Together they scuffled across the surface as they started exploring a world outside the Earth's atmosphere. Their mission was to gather precious samples of materials (rock particles and soil) from the moon using specialised tools. They were watched on live television by billions of people. Apollo 11 carried 22 kilograms of geological material billions of years old back to Earth, including two core tubes with pieces of material wrestled from the layers that lie below the moon's surface.

Their adventure ended on July 24th when Apollo 11 re-entered Earth's atmosphere travelling at more than 24,600 miles per hour. Shortly after re-entry their capsule landed, parachutes billowing, with a gentle splashdown in the Pacific Ocean. They had been away from Earth for just over a week.

- When was the first moon landing?
- Why did the astronauts go to the moon?
- How did people know about the moon landing?
- How do you think the astronauts felt as they re-entered Earth's atmosphere?
- What do you think happened after the splashdown in the Pacific Ocean?



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