

Dream Jobs: Astronaut

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TOP: "Rocketing into space aboard the space shuttle Challenger as the first American woman to fly in space is one of my favorite moments" – Sally Ride. NASA.

Sally Ride was America's first woman in space. She died in 2012. She talked about her life before she passed away.

Where are you from?

I am from Los Angeles, California.

Describe the first time you were in outer space.

I remember floating over to the window and I looked toward the horizon. I saw a very, very thin blue line all the way across. It looked like someone had taken a blue pencil and outlined the Earth. The blue line was Earth's atmosphere.

How did you end up working in the space program?

I went to Stanford University in California for bachelor's degrees. I also got a doctorate degree in science from Stanford.

In 1978, I saw an ad for NASA in a newspaper. NASA is the U.S. space agency. More than 8,000 men and women tried to get a job as an astronaut that year. NASA chose 35 people. Six of them were women, and I was one of them.

Who inspired you?

My father inspired me. Education was very important to him. He wanted to make sure that his daughters knew the importance of education to get ahead in the world.

What is Sally Ride Science?

I am the first American woman to fly in space. I was an astronaut on NASA's seventh space shuttle mission. It launched on June 18, 1983. I retired from NASA in 1987.

I started my own company in 2001. I called it Sally Ride Science. I wanted to help girls to grow up and get jobs in science, math and technology. I've wanted to do this my whole life.

Lots of girls are interested in science. They are just like me when I was growing up!

Tell us about a favorite moment in your career.

Flying into space. I loved being weightless! There's really nothing like it on Earth. I did what lots of astronauts do. I held my pencil in front of my face and let go of it. It floated! Eventually I could do 30 somersaults in a row. I also could slither like a seal from one side of the cabin to the other with just a gentle push.

We played a little bit with our food. We floated a blob of orange juice. We also sent peanuts into each others' mouths. Fun!

What do you do for fun?

When I was younger I played tennis. Now, I enjoy running, volleyball, softball and collecting stamps.

If you were talking to a student interested in science and math or engineering, what would you say to them?

Stay interested in science and do well in math and science classes. Science and math are important to our country's future.

Editor's Note: This story about Sally Ride comes from the website SallyRideScience.com

Quiz

- 1 Read the first paragraph below from the article.

Sally Ride was America's first woman in space. She died in 2012. She talked about her life before she passed away.

Which question is answered in the paragraph?

- (A) Where did Sally Ride live most of her life?
- (B) When did Sally Ride become an astronaut?
- (C) Why is Sally Ride an important person?
- (D) How did Sally Ride become an astronaut?

- 2 Which of these sentences from the article explains why Sally Ride started the company called Sally Ride Science?

- (A) I was an astronaut on NASA's seventh space shuttle mission.
- (B) I started my own company in 2001.
- (C) I called it Sally Ride Science.
- (D) I wanted to help girls to grow up and get jobs in science, math and technology.

- 3 Which of these sections of the article gives information about some of the things Sally Ride does when she is not working?

- (A) "Where are you from?"
- (B) "How did you end up working in the space program?"
- (C) "What do you do for fun?"
- (D) "If you were talking to a student interested in science and math or engineering, what would you say to them?"

- 4 What is the purpose of the section "Tell us about a favorite moment in your career."?

- (A) to describe how Sally Ride became an astronaut
- (B) to describe how Earth looked to Sally Ride when she was an astronaut
- (C) to describe something Sally Ride really liked about being an astronaut
- (D) to describe the work that Sally Ride did when she was in space