

Discussion Questions: *T-Minus, the Race to the Moon*

ALLEN Reads 2010-11

This book makes much more sense if there is an understanding of the time in which it takes place. Have students/readers learn about it e.g. a quick read of http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/space_race sets the scene very well...

1. What started the “space race”?
2. Why were the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. such fierce competitors?
3. How did the competition between the two countries spur the U.S. in a positive direction? How do you react in a competitive situation?
4. What does it mean to take a “calculated risk”? Is this important in this story? In your life?
5. There were a lot of pessimists concerning the success of NASA and their mission. How did the leaders there react? Have you ever had to deal with “naysayers”? What did you do?
6. New words had to be created to describe this new venture. The Soviets called their space pilots “cosmonauts.” The Americans coined the word “astronaut.” Going back to the Greek roots, what do these names mean?
7. Do you think those first astronauts were especially brave? Why or why not?
8. What did the astronauts accomplish by going into space?
9. How has the space program affected our everyday lives today?
10. Do you think our country could be motivated enough to get behind space exploration again to the extent that we did in the 1960’s? Why or why not?