



NEXT STOP: MARS

People have been walking on the surface of Mars for more than a century, in fantasy. Now, however, the possibility is so real that many people think the question is not whether humans will go to Mars, but when they will go, how they will get there and who will go first.

Although there is growing agreement that reaching Mars will be some kind of multinational effort, a prosperous nation, like the United States, seems capable of such an achievement by itself. For the US it is a political priority. The cost of the project has been estimated at \$60 billion, about double the price of the Apollo Moon project.

Of all the other planets in the solar system, Mars is the most like Earth. With about half the Earth's diameter, with one third of the gravity and only one percent of the atmosphere, space vehicles have found that Mars hides an important amount of water under its surface and in its frozen poles. While Venus is closer, with an average temperature of about 850 degrees, it is hostile.

From the presence of water and a relatively moderate climate comes another powerful attraction. The fascination with Mars centres around the issue of life. Mars is key to answering that critical question:

Is there life somewhere other than on Earth?

(A) COMPREHENSION

1) Answer questions 1-2 according to the information given in the text. Use your own words.

- a) Is reaching Mars only a scientific challenge? Why?
 - b) What is the most interesting reason for exploring Mars?
- 2) Are these statements true or false? Justify your answers with words or phrases from the text.

a) Mankind has actually set foot on Mars.

- c) Reaching Mars can cost as much as reaching the moon.
- d) Mars is the same size as the Earth.
- e) Venus's climate is gentle.

(B) USE OF ENGLISH

3. Answer the next questions:

- a) Find in the text the word which has the following definition:
"a plan for work or activity of any kind" (noun)
- b) Find in the text one opposite for FRIENDLY (adjective).
- c) Give a noun with the same root as POLITICAL (adjective).
- d) Give one synonym for PROSPEROUS (line 5) (adjective).

4. Answer the next questions:

- a) Join the following sentences using a relative pronoun. Make changes if necessary.
A dog was sent into space in 1957. Its name was Laika.
- b) Turn the following sentence into the passive voice:
We are going to invite Dr Livingstone to participate in the project.



c) Rewrite the sentence without changing its meaning. Begin as indicated.

African countries are too poor to build a space station.

African countries aren't...

(C) PRODUCTION

Write a composition (80-100 WORDS) Choose ONE of the following options. Specify your option.

a) Should the money of the Mars project go to poor countries? Why?

b) Do you believe there is life outside our planet? Why?

