

Space Vehicle Launch Facility Celebrates its 60th Anniversary

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. Launch /lɔːntʃ/ (noun) the act of sending a missile, spacecraft, etc. on its course
Example: The spacecraft was launched 5 minutes ago.
2. Mission /'mɪʃən/ (noun) an important or official task, job, goal, etc.
Example: The soldiers ventured on an important mission.
3. On the horizon /ɑːn ðə hə'raɪzən/ (phrase) happening soon
Example: The deadline is on the horizon and we still have more than half of the proposal to complete.
4. Abort /ə'boːrt/ə'boːrt/ (verb) to stop something before it has been completed due to a problem
Example: The leader ordered them to abort the mission.
5. Astronaut /'æstrə,nɔːt/ (noun) a person whose job involves traveling to space
Example: Neil Armstrong first worked as an astronaut in 1962.
6. Complex /'kɒ:mpleks/ (noun) a group of similar or related buildings on one site
Example: There is a huge shopping complex in the middle of the city,



When Neil Armstrong took "one small step" onto the moon in 1969, people may have believed that by 2022 trips into space would be as easy as a plane flight. There aren't hotels on Mars just yet. But as Florida's Kennedy Space Center (KSC) — NASA's main launch site — celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2022, with moon and Mars missions on the horizon, the planets are a little closer than they once were. KSC is named after John F. Kennedy, the American president who started the country's moon program.

He said in 1962: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard." All seven US moon missions —

including Apollo 11 and the aborted Apollo 13 mission — launched from KSC. Skylab, the US's first space station, was also launched from KSC in 1973.

However, the space shuttle Challenger also rose from KSC 73 seconds before it exploded, killing all seven astronauts inside. More than 1.5 million space fans visit the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex each year. Opened in 1967, the 170,000-square-meter complex is about 10 kilometers from KSC's rocket launch sites.

There, in the Rocket Garden, the size of the machines becomes clear as guests stand next to rockets up to 68 meters tall. They also get the chance to meet astronauts and even touch a piece of moon rock as they tour the site. And in summer 2022, the Gateway building opened at the Visitor Complex, allowing guests to experience the sights and sounds of space travel. It's also a great place to see a real-life launch — if you're lucky. There were 12 launches at KSC in 2021, but they are often delayed at the last moment by weather or technical problems.

DISCUSSION

1. Would you be interested in visiting the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex?
2. Do you think space travel will be as common as air travel within your lifetime?
3. Would you like to see a rocket launch in person?
4. Does your country have a space program? If so, when was it started?
5. Have you been to any science or technology museums?
6. Would you rather travel to the moon or Mars?