

NASA Selects 10 New Astronauts

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **applicant** (noun) /'æp.lɪ.kənt/ – A person who applies for a job or position.
Example: NASA received over 8,000 applicants for its new astronaut class.
2. **eligible** (adjective) /'el.ɪ.dʒə.bəl/ – Having the right qualifications to do something.
Example: After training, the astronauts will be eligible for spaceflight.
3. **ceremony** (noun) /'ser.ɪ.mə.ni/ – A formal public event to celebrate or mark an occasion.
Example: The new astronauts were introduced at a ceremony in Houston.
4. **distinguished** (adjective) /dɪ'strɪŋ.gwɪft/ – Recognized for excellence or outstanding achievements.
Example: NASA called the newcomers a distinguished group.
5. **orbit** (noun) /'ɔ:r.bɪt/ – The path an object takes around a planet or star.
Example: One new astronaut candidate has already been to orbit.



NASA has chosen its 10 newest astronauts from more than 8,000 applicants to help explore the moon and possibly Mars.

They include a geologist who worked on NASA's Curiosity Mars rover, several military pilots and scientists, a former SpaceX launch director, and a medical doctor. For the first time, there are more women than men in a new astronaut class.

The six women and four men will spend two years training before becoming eligible for spaceflight.

At the ceremony in Houston, Acting Administrator Sean Duffy said one of them might be among

the first to step on Mars. He also said the U.S. plans to win the new race to the moon.

This is NASA's 24th astronaut class since the original Mercury Seven in 1959. The last class was chosen in 2021.

So far, only 370 people have ever been selected as NASA astronauts, and most have been men. The new group will join the 41 currently active astronauts.

NASA's flight operations director Norm Knight said competition was tough and called the newcomers "distinguished" and "exceptional."

Anna Menon, who flew on a SpaceX mission with billionaire Jared Isaacman, is NASA's first candidate who has already been to orbit. Her husband, a former SpaceX flight surgeon, was in NASA's last class.

Lauren Edgar, a U.S. Geological Survey scientist, worked on the Curiosity rover and the Artemis moon mission team. She said she was excited to officially join the NASA family.

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think becoming an astronaut is still such a rare opportunity?
2. How might having more women than men in a class influence NASA's future missions?
3. Do you think two years of training is enough preparation for space travel? Why or why not?
4. How does NASA's link to Mars exploration affect global interest in space programs?
5. What role do private companies like SpaceX play in shaping NASA's future?
6. Which qualities do you think NASA looks for when choosing astronauts from thousands of applicants?
7. If you could train to be an astronaut, would you do it? Why or why not?