

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

READING

The Secret Plan to Nuke* the Moon!

Vocabulary Preview

*nuke = slang: to attack with a nuclear weapon

- Match the words on the left with the meanings on the right.

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------|---|
| 1. recover | <u>E</u> | A. a machine sent into space to travel around Earth |
| 2. destruction | _____ | B. quickly increasing in size |
| 3. booming | _____ | C. a kind of very powerful bomb |
| 4. launch | _____ | D. to decide not to do a previously arranged activity |
| 5. satellite | _____ | E. to return to a normal after a difficult experience |
| 6. orbit | _____ | F. to send something into space |
| 7. nuclear weapon | _____ | G. to move around a star or planet |
| 8. cancel | _____ | H. the act of completely damaging / destroying |

- Use the above words to complete the sentences. Change the forms of verbs and nouns when necessary.

1. Our company is doing great! Business is booming!
2. When will SpaceX _____ its first rockets to Mars?
3. There's a big storm. Do you think our school will _____ classes?
4. Try this medicine. It will help you to _____ faster.
5. Just one _____ could destroy an entire city.
6. How long does it take our planet to _____ the sun?
7. Throughout history, volcanoes have caused a lot of _____.
8. There are now thousands of _____ circling the earth.

- Choose any two of the above words and write your own sentences.

1. _____
2. _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

READING

Topics: Moon / Space & Space Travel

The Secret Plan To Nuke the Moon!



The year was 1957, and much of our planet was still **recovering**¹ from the **destruction**² of the Second World War. As well, many countries (such as Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam) were beginning to experience violent political changes. In the United States, however, things were different. The economy was growing, the population was **booming**³, and for many Americans life was good, and the future looked even brighter. There was nothing in the world, it seemed, that could change this. When change did happen, on October 4 1957, it didn't happen on our planet, but several hundreds of miles above it. That's when the Soviet Union **launched**⁴ Sputnik, the first human-made **satellite**⁵ to **orbit**⁶ the earth. In the Soviet Union, this was a reason to celebrate! However, in America this was seen as a challenge: which country was going to control space? Which country was better? The "Space Race" was just beginning! Unfortunately for the United States, America had no quick way to respond. It had no serious rocket program, and it would be another twelve years before Apollo 11 landed on the moon. The U.S. did, however, have lots of **nuclear weapons**⁷. A secret plan was therefore soon developed (in May 1958) to send a nuclear weapon to the moon and explode it. The plan was called "Project A119". Because the moon is so big, it was in no danger of being destroyed – but it was hoped the explosion would be big enough to be seen by people on Earth. This would show the Russians how strong America was. The plan was **cancelled**⁸, however, in January 1959 partly because of the possible danger to the people of Earth if there was an accident.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

READING

Grammar Practice

The Secret Plan to Nuke the Moon!

The year was 1957, and much of our planet (1)_____ still recovering from the destruction of the Second World War. As well, many countries (such as Korea, Cuba, and Vietnam) were beginning to (2)_____ violent political changes. In the United States, (3)_____, things were different. The economy was growing, the population was booming, and for many Americans life was (4)_____, and the future looked even brighter. There was nothing in the world, it seemed, that could (5)_____ this. When change did happen, on October 4 1957, it didn't happen on our planet, but several hundreds of miles above it. That's when the Soviet Union launched⁴ Sputnik, (6)_____ human-made satellite to orbit the earth. In the Soviet Union, this was a reason to celebrate! However, in America this was (7)_____ as a challenge: which country was going to control space? Which country was better? The "Space Race" was just (8)_____! Unfortunately for the United States, America had no quick way to (9)_____. It had no serious rocket program, and it would be another twelve years before Apollo 11 landed on the moon. The U.S. did, however, have (10)_____ nuclear weapons. A secret plan was therefore soon developed (in May 1958) to send a nuclear weapon to the moon and explode it. The plan was called "Project A119". Because the moon is so big, it was in no danger of being destroyed – but it was hoped the explosion would be (11)_____ to be seen by people on Earth. This would show the Russians how strong America was. The plan was cancelled, however, in January 1959, partly (12)_____ the possible danger to the people of Earth if there was an accident.

1.

- (A) is
- (B) were
- (C) was

2.

- (A) experience
- (B) experienced
- (C) experiencing

3.

- (A) however
- (B) therefore
- (C) whereas

4.

- (A) as well
- (B) well
- (C) good

5.

- (A) changed
- (B) change
- (C) changing

6.

- (A) first
- (B) the first
- (C) a first

7.

- (A) seen
- (B) saw
- (C) seeing

8.

- (A) began
- (B) begin
- (C) beginning

9.

- (A) responsible
- (B) responsive
- (C) respond

10.

- (A) lot
- (B) lots of
- (C) a lot

11.

- (A) big enough
- (B) enough big
- (C) bigger

12.

- (A) cause
- (B) because of
- (C) because

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

READING

The Secret Plan to Nuke the Moon!



How Much Do You Understand?

● **Complete the statements.**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Second World War | A. explode a nuclear weapon on the moon. |
| 2. The 1950s was a time of | B. economic growth in the USA. |
| 3. The USSR launched a | C. show the Russians it was strong. |
| 4. The US responded with a plan to | D. it was too dangerous. |
| 5. America thought this would | E. caused a lot of damage around the world. |
| 6. The plan was cancelled because | F. satellite called Sputnik in 1957 |

Discuss

● **Discuss the following questions with your classmates.**

1. One reason that Project A119 was cancelled was that it was too dangerous. What additional reasons might have led to its cancellation?
2. In what ways was the Space Race (competition in space) a good thing?
3. In what ways was the Space Race a bad thing?

Write

● **What three reasons can you think of for humans to return to the moon, and maybe even to the planet Mars?**

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

WRITING

The Secret Plan to Nuke the Moon!

- ***The possibility that a nuclear accident might happen was just one of the reasons why Project A119 was cancelled. Write a short paragraph and suggest other reasons for why the project was cancelled.***

Lesson "The Secret Plan to Nuke the Moon!"

Grammar Focus Mixed: Past Simple & Cont., Passive, "would" (talk about future in the past)

Vocabulary 286 words

A1 words-63% / **A2** words-15% / **B1** words-9% / **B2** words-6% / **C1** words-0% / **C2** words-0% / **Off List**-7%

AWL Words in this text: *challenge, economy, nuclear, project, recovering, respond*

Vocabulary Analysis by: vocabkitchen.com

Level Intermediate to Upper Intermediate (CEFR B1 – B2)

ANSWER KEY Page 1

● Vocabulary

- | | |
|------|-----------------------|
| 1. E | 1. booming |
| 2. H | 2. launch |
| 3. B | 3. cancel |
| 4. F | 4. recover |
| 5. A | 5. nuclear weapon |
| 6. G | 6. orbit |
| 7. C | 7. destruction |
| 8. D | 8. satellite s |

ANSWER KEY Page 3

● Grammar

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 7. A |
| 2. A | 8. C |
| 3. A | 9. C |
| 4. C | 10. B |
| 5. B | 11. A |
| 6. B | 12. B |

ANSWER KEY Page 4

● How Much Do You Understand?

1. The Second World War (E) caused a lot of damage around the world.
2. The 1950s was a time of (B) economic growth in the USA.
3. The USSR launched a (F) satellite called Sputnik in 1957.
4. The US responded with a plan to (A) explode a nuclear weapon on the moon.
5. America thought this would (C) show the Russians it was strong.
6. The plan was cancelled because (D) it was too dangerous.

Article Sources:

- *Project A119*
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_A119#:~:text=Project%20A119%2C%20also%20known%20as,in%20planetary%20astronomy%20and%20astrogeology.
- *Why the Air Force Almost Blasted the Moon with an H-Bomb*
<https://www.history.com/news/nuclear-bomb-moon-cold-war-plan>
- *In the 1950s, America Wanted to Nuke the Moon*
https://www.cracked.com/article_25405_in-1950s-america-wanted-to-nuke-moon.html