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Planes to rockets in sixty years

There are just sixty years between the first flight and the first man on the moon. In the 20th century, progress in aviation was phenomenal.

1909 – the first air journey



On July 25 1909, a Frenchman, Louis Blériot, became the first man to complete an air journey when he flew from Calais, in the north of France, to Dover, in the south of England. Blériot's flight amazed the whole of Europe. People thought that such a journey was impossible.





Louis Blériot

The flight

The flight wasn't easy. Mr Blériot, a 37-year-old engineer, couldn't swim, so he didn't want to come down in the Channel. He couldn't walk very well because of an injury to his leg, and he didn't have a compass.

On the morning of the 25th, he took off at 4.30 from a field at the edge of a cliff. It took 37 minutes to complete the 22-mile journey. The plane flew at 40 miles per hour at an altitude of 250 feet.

Everything went well until he flew into fog. 'I continued flying for ten minutes, but I couldn't see the land, only the sky and the sea. It was the most dangerous part of the flight. I wasn't worried about the machine. It flew beautifully. Finally, I saw the land,' he told reporters.

Landing in England

When he got to Dover, he saw a French journalist waving a flag. He cut the engine at 60 feet and crashed into a field.

The news quickly went round the world, and Mr Blériot's flight was celebrated in London and Paris. He won a prize of £1,000.

'The crossing was the start of modern aviation,' said Louis Blériot, the grandson of the pioneer.



1969 – the first man on the moon



Neil Armstrong Michael Collins Buzz Aldrin

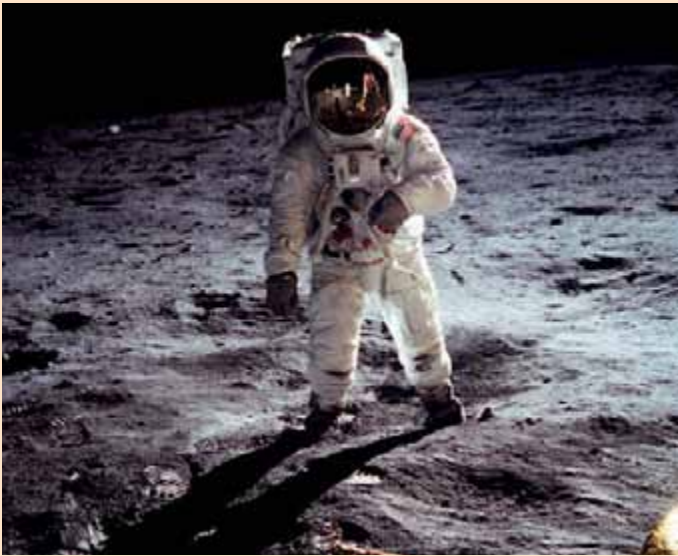
On 16 July 1969, at 9.30 in the morning, **Apollo 11** lifted off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. There were three astronauts – **Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins**. The enormous rocket took three days to complete the 250,000 miles to the moon, travelling at six miles per second (21,600 miles an hour). Then it circled the moon 30 times, giving time to prepare for the landing.

The lunar landing

The lunar module landed on a part of the moon called the Sea of Tranquility at 8.17 in the evening on 20 July.

It was time for the astronauts to rest, but they were too excited to sleep. At 3.00 in the morning on July 21, **Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon**. Six hundred million people all over the world watched on TV. As Armstrong took his first steps, he said the famous words, 'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'





Walking on the moon

Armstrong and Aldrin spent two and a half hours walking on the moon. They collected samples and set up scientific equipment. Finally, they put up a US flag. After 22 hours on the moon, the lunar module lifted off and flew up to join the rocket that took them back to Earth. They left an inscription:

Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon,
July 1969. We came in peace for all mankind.

This flight was the beginning of man's exploration of space.