**MNPS**

**English Language Arts**

**Writing Task 3: Argument**

**Grade 7**

March 2019

**Directions**

For this assignment, you will read a passage or set of passages and then write a response to a writing task. This task gives you a chance to show how well you can organize and express your ideas in written text.

After reading the passage(s) and writing task, take a few minutes to think about what you have read and to plan what you want to write before you begin to answer. Do your best to write a clear and well-organized response. Be sure to keep in mind your purpose and audience when developing your response.

Be sure to review your work before you turn it in.

**TEXT 1**

**from “A Success in Space”**

by Cameron Keady

1. On November 12, 2014, a small probe helped scientists take a big step forward in space exploration. The probe, called the Philae lander, is the first spacecraft to set down on a comet. It will take photos and dig up samples from the comet’s surface.
2. The Philae [FIL-ay] lander is about the size of a washing machine. It dropped from the Rosetta spacecraft and landed on the comet Churyumov- Gerasimenko, also known as 67p. This mission could give researchers valuable information about the origins of our solar system and how it evolved.

**A Long Journey**

1. Rosetta traveled for 10 years, and across 4 billion miles, to reach its destination. The craft was launched in 2004 by the European Space Agency to observe comets. In 2011, Rosetta was powered down to conserve energy. Early this year, scientists brought it back to life to study 67p.
2. Philae separated from Rosetta about 14 miles above the comet. At first, the lander failed to fire anchoring harpoons**1** into the surface. It bounced three times before coming to a stop, said Stephan Ulamec, the lander project manager.
3. The Philae lander will travel the surface of 67p and conduct a variety of scientific experiments. It could reveal secrets about the makeup of comets and the formation of our solar system. Researchers consider comets the remains of the ancient solar system. Their contents are preserved in a deep freeze because they spend much of their time far away from the sun. “What we believe is that we will study the most primitive**2** material in the solar system,” says scientist Gerhard Schwehm. He served as Rosetta’s mission manager at the ESA from 2011 until his retirement earlier this year.

**1 anchoring harpoons:** barbed, spear-like missiles shot into the surface of the comet to hold the spacecraft

**2 primitive:** being the first or earliest of the kind or in existence

**In the Dark**

1. Scientists have not yet been able to determine exactly where Philae landed. Based on the first images the lander has sent back, they believe it is partially in a shadow of a cliff. That could be a problem, because it would prevent the lander from using its solar panels to collect energy from the sun. Currently, the scientists are updating their plans to get Philae out of the darkness.
2. Despite any initial concerns, the team is in good spirits—and so is Philae. On the night of its arrival, the lander tweeted a photo to its mother ship @ESA\_Rosetta. “The view is absolutely breathtaking ESA\_Rosetta! Unlike anything I've ever seen #CometLanding,” the tweet read.
3. Though it took a decade to get to 67p, Philae’s stay on the comet will be a short one. As soon as it landed, a 64-hour countdown began. When it ends, Philae’s on-board battery will run down. But Rosetta will continue to travel with 67p, sending information about the comet back to Earth for as long as it can.

Excerpt from “A Success in Space,” by Cameron Keady, from *Time for Kids.* November 14, 2014.

# TEXT 2

**from “America’s New Spacecraft”**

by Cameron Keady

1. Liftoff! After NASA called off three countdowns on Thursday, December 4, 2014, the Orion spacecraft successfully launched into space early this morning. The craft orbited Earth twice and traveled a distance of 3,600 miles before it landed in the Pacific Ocean around 11:30 A.M. on Friday, December 15. “The flight is designed to test many of the most vital elements for human spaceflight,” said NASA in a statement. “[It] will provide critical data needed to improve Orion’s design and reduce risks to future mission crews.”

**Takeoff and Touchdown**

1. The original launch was set for December 4. To successfully take off, a spacecraft requires a rocket. Orion traveled to space aboard the Delta IV rocket.
2. Several valves are used to fill and drain Delta IV with propellant prior to liftoff. Due to valve issues that could not be fixed before the launch time was scheduled, Orion’s takeoff was put on hold. The NASA team also worried strong winds would hinder the craft’s ability to take off. But winds stayed below the limit of 24 miles per hour, and the Orion capsule lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, in Florida, at 7:05 A.M.
3. The capsule reached a peak altitude more than 14 times farther from Earth than the International Space Station. No spacecraft designed for astronauts has gone so far since the Apollo 17 mission 42 years ago. NASA is now “one step closer” to putting humans aboard Orion, said NASA Administrator Charles Bolden Jr. He called it “Day One of the Mars era.”
4. Orion landed in the ocean about 270 miles west of Mexico’s Baja peninsula at approximately 11:30 this morning. The U.S. Navy was there to recover the spacecraft, where it will be brought to land. Mission Control commentator Rob Navias called the voyage “the most perfect flight you could ever imagine,” calling the spacecraft’s landing in the Pacific Ocean “a bulls-eye.”

**A Mission for the Future**

1. Orion’s voyage is an experimental mission, with no astronauts onboard. The goal of the mission is to someday take astronauts to Mars. The experimental flight was intended to test the capabilities of the spacecraft to ensure it is suitable for a future manned mission to the Red Planet.
2. The Orion spacecraft will not carry astronauts until 2021 at the earliest. But NASA hopes that someday the capsule will be able to take people back to the moon or to Mars.
3. Orion wasn’t entirely unmanned, however. Some familiar objects rode aboard the spacecraft. As part of a public outreach effort with Sesame Street, NASA made room for Ernie’s Rubber Duckie, Oscar the Grouch’s pet worm Slimey, and one of Cookie Monster’s cookies aboard Orion.
4. “T” is for “Touchdown,” and that’s good enough for NASA.

Excerpt from “America’s New Spacecraft” by Cameron Keady, from *Time for Kids*. December 5, 2014.

**Writing Prompt**

You have read texts about two space missions. Write an essay that explains the purpose of **each** mission and then argues which mission was more successful. Develop your essay by providing textual evidence from **both** passages.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

* 1. Plan your essay
  2. Write your essay

Be sure to

* 1. Include a claim
  2. Use evidence from **BOTH** passages
  3. Avoid over relying on one passage

Your written response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay.