

## LISTENING (0:00 - 2:50)

1. What's depicted in the famous photo taken from the window of the command module Columbia?
2. Who is Michael Collins?
3. Why was Michael Collins dubbed "The Loneliest Man In the Universe"? List 3 reasons.
4. How did Collins fight solitude?
5. What was Collins' main concern?
6. Why was the special speech written for President Nixon?

## GRAMMAR: UNREAL PAST AND HYPOTHETICAL MEANING

What do you think was going through Michael Collins' head when he was orbiting the Moon by himself? Try to use the words from the box.

wish   hope   if   were   suppose   had   as though   it's time  
rather   could

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

## LISTENING cont. (2:51 - 3:41)

1. How was Michael Collins' post-Apollo life different from those of Aldrin and Armstrong?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How did he feel about his "Forgotten Astronaut" status?

## SPEAKING

1. Do you think Collins deserved to become a **household name**?
2. Why do some people receive more **recognition** for their role or achievements than others?
3. In what ways can people get **validation** for their accomplishments?
4. Can you think of other **unsung heroes** of important events?
5. Are there any benefits of being **shaded from the glare of publicity**?

## READING

Put the missing parts of the text into the gaps.

### How Michael Collins became the forgotten astronaut of Apollo 11

- A. In fact, the opposite happened. Collins was forgotten
- B. In his case, the astronaut was obsessed with the reliability of the ascent engine of Armstrong and Aldrin's lander, Eagle. It had never been fired on the Moon's surface before and many astronauts had serious doubts about its reliability.
- C. His worst fear had not materialised and he returned safely to Earth in the company of Armstrong and Aldrin, unmarked by the experience.
- D. Neither description fits him, he added.
- E. The message would banish Collins's deepest fear: that he would be the only survivor of an Apollo 11 disaster and that he was destined to return on his own to the United States as "a marked man".
- F. Nor were the astronauts alone. Richard Nixon, then US president, had even prepared a speech that he would deliver in the event of the Eagle's engine failing.

It was the secret terror that gripped astronaut Michael Collins throughout the Apollo 11 project 40 years ago. As his spacecraft, Columbia, swept over the lunar surface, Collins - the mission's third and largely forgotten crewman - waited for a call from fellow astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin to say their lander craft had successfully blasted off from the Moon. 1)\_\_\_\_\_.

The realisation that the normally icy-cool astronaut was so obsessed by such an outcome puts a fresh perspective on the celebrations that will, this weekend, absorb the United States as it commemorates the moment, on 21 July 1969, that an American first walked on another world. Apollo 11 will be presented as a flawless technological triumph at many events across the nation.

Yet at the time, worries that the mission would end in disaster consumed nearly all of those involved in the programme - despite their apparent calm. And no one was more stressed than Collins, it appears. 2)\_\_\_\_\_ . Should the engine fail to ignite, Armstrong and Aldrin would be stranded on the Moon - where they would die when their oxygen ran out. Or if it failed to burn for at least seven minutes, then the two astronauts would either crash back on to the Moon or be stranded in low orbit around it, beyond the reach of Collins in his mothership, Columbia.

All three astronauts believed there was a real chance such a disaster would occur. Armstrong thought his prospects were only 50-50 of making it back to Earth. And so did Collins, the pilot of Columbia and one of the world's most experienced aviators.

3)\_\_\_\_\_ "Fate has ordained that the men who went to the Moon to explore in peace will stay on the Moon to rest in peace," it ran.

Thus Collins - alone in Columbia as the world focused on Armstrong and Aldrin walking on the lunar surface - fretted about his two companions below him on the Moon and revealed, in a note written at the time, that he was now "sweating like a nervous bride" as he waited to hear from the Eagle. Then Armstrong and Aldrin prepared their lander for its launch. Armstrong pressed the engine's firing button and Eagle soared perfectly above the lunar surface towards the waiting Collins.

4)\_\_\_\_\_ . He would not suffer a fate of global notoriety.

5)\_\_\_\_\_ . Today most people still know the names of the two first men on the Moon and recall the words, delivered by Armstrong, about taking a giant leap for mankind. But the name Michael Collins is rarely recalled, despite his critical role in the historic flight of Apollo 11. Not that he holds grudges. "It was an honour," he said last week.

Today he remains cheerful about his role on Apollo 11, although he describes himself as becoming increasingly grumpy. "At age 78, some things about current society irritate me, such as the adulation of celebrities and inflation of heroism," he said last week. 6)\_\_\_\_\_ "Heroes abound, but don't count astronauts among them. We worked very hard, we did our jobs to near perfection, but that is what we had been hired to do."

Adapted from [The Guardian](#)

## READING: ANSWER KEY

1. E

2. B

3. F

4. C

5. A

6. D