



Space Shuttle Discovery's Accomplishments

Astronauts remember some of the key moments and accomplishments that made space shuttle *Discovery* so special.

Conversation Club Discussion Questions

1. The space shuttle *Discovery* was the third of six space orbiters ever built, and was completed in 1983. What does that tell you about the duration of the shuttle program and how long it may have lasted?
2. When *Discovery* was completed it was seen as a huge leap in engineering. What other examples can you think of where advances in technology, engineering, or design led to a sudden, exciting innovation? Is there something that you think is overdue as a great advance in engineering or design? What is it?
3. The two capsules that came before the shuttle *Discovery* are mentioned in the video and are described to as "little gumdrops," which are a type of candy. What do you think the space capsules look like? Can you think of examples of other man-made objects with nicknames based on their shape or what they resemble?
4. What do you think of the ambitions of the NASA program at the time that the *Discovery* shuttle was built? Do you think there is still merit in seeing how humans might move beyond Earth, and no longer live "in the grip of Earth's gravity?"
5. One of the astronauts interviewed, Pam Melroy, describes how it was her lifetime dream to go to space. Can you relate to that kind of sustained, lifelong dream? Alternatively, are there dreams that you had when you were younger that you're glad never come to pass?
6. Several of the astronauts interviewed in the video describe their fond memories of the shuttle and their attachment to the shuttle because of those memories. Are there examples of this same kind of sentimental attachment in your own life?
7. *Discovery* was part of the mission to deploy the space telescope Hubble. Do you know what Hubble is? Why might it be, as astronaut Bill Readdy suggests, one of the most historic missions ever launched?
8. What do you think of the name "*Discovery*" for a space shuttle? If you could nominate a name for a space shuttle or space telescope what might you choose?