

**FLEYDO ENGLISH SCHOOL**

A1 Reading Challenge

# The First Person in Space

*On 12 April 1961, a young man from Russia went into space. He was the first.*

<b>Level</b>	A1 (Beginner)
<b>Age Group</b>	Teens (11-16)
<b>Topic</b>	True Stories
<b>Duration</b>	~10 minutes
<b>Vocabulary</b>	12 words
<b>Quiz</b>	5 questions

## Article

Look up at the sky at night. You can see the moon and many stars. They are all far away in **space**. For a long time, people wanted to go there. They wanted to see **space** with their own eyes. But it was very hard. Space is a long way from **Earth**. It is also very **dangerous**. Then, in 1961, one young man did it. His name was Yuri Gagarin. He was from Russia. He was the first person to **fly** into space. This is his story.

### A Boy from a Small Village

Yuri Gagarin was born in 1934. His family lived in a small village in Russia. They were not rich. His father was a carpenter. His mother worked on a farm. Yuri had two brothers and one sister. When Yuri was a boy, there was a big war. The war was very hard for his family. Their house was small. They had little food. But Yuri was a happy boy. He liked school. He was good at maths. He loved planes. He wanted to **fly** in the sky one day.

### Yuri Becomes a Pilot

When Yuri was older, he went to a school for pilots. He learned to **fly** small planes. He was very good. His teachers liked him. They said, "Yuri is a great **pilot**." He was small — only 1.57 metres tall. But this was good for **space**. Spacecraft are small inside. Tall people cannot fit. In 1960, Russia wanted to send a person into **space** for the first time. They looked at many young pilots. They wanted the best one. After many tests, they chose Yuri. He was strong, clever, and brave. He had a kind face and a big smile.

### The Big Day

The big day was 12 April 1961. Yuri was 27 years old. The **rocket** was called Vostok 1. It was very tall. It had a small room at the top for Yuri. The room was called a capsule. It was very small. He could only sit. He could not stand up or walk. Yuri put on a special suit. It was orange and white. He had a big helmet on his head. He climbed into the capsule. The doors closed. He was alone. He waited inside the **rocket** for about two hours. Then he heard the words: "Three, two, one... go!" The rocket started to move. Big flames came out at the bottom. The rocket went up very fast. Yuri said one word: "Poyekhali!" In Russian, it means "Let's go!"

### 108 Minutes in Space

The **rocket** went up and up. After ten minutes, Yuri was in **space**! He was very high above the **Earth**. He looked out of a small window. He saw something amazing. The **Earth** was blue! It was beautiful. He could see the oceans, the clouds, and the brown shape of the **land**. He said, "The Earth is blue. How wonderful." Yuri's spacecraft went around the whole **planet**. It took only 108 minutes. He was the first person to see Earth from **space**. He saw something that no one else had ever seen. In the capsule, things

floated in the air. Yuri's arms went up. His pencil floated. He could not feel his weight. This is called zero gravity.

## Coming Home

After 108 minutes, it was time to go home. The capsule started to come down to the **Earth**. It went very fast. The outside of the capsule got very, very hot. Yuri waited inside. The capsule had a small parachute. The parachute opened high in the sky. But Yuri did not **land** in the capsule. He came out and used his own parachute. He landed in a field in Russia. There were no people in the field. There was only an old woman and a small girl. They were very surprised. They saw a man in an orange suit walking towards them. The girl was scared. She asked, "Are you from **space**?" Yuri smiled and said, "Yes! But don't be afraid. I am Russian, just like you."

## A Hero Around the World

Yuri Gagarin became the most **famous** man in the world. People in Russia were very happy. There were big parties in the streets. Yuri met the leader of his **country**. He got many medals. After Russia, Yuri went on a trip around the world. He visited more than 30 countries. He went to England, France, Japan, Egypt, Brazil, and many more. People came to see him in big crowds. Children sent him letters. Yuri was a **hero**. But he was also a kind man. He had a big smile. He was friendly to everyone. He always remembered his small village.

## A Sad End

Sadly, Yuri's story has a sad end. He never went to **space** again. The leaders said it was too **dangerous**. They did not want to lose their **hero**. Yuri was sad about this. He loved flying. He went back to flying planes. On 27 March 1968, Yuri was flying a small plane. There was an accident. His plane crashed. Yuri died. He was only 34 years old. The whole world was sad. People in many countries cried. Today, you can find his name in many places. There are streets, schools, and statues with his name. There is even a city called Gagarin in Russia. The big **space** airport is called Baikonur. Many astronauts go to space from there today. Before they go, they touch a tree that Yuri planted in 1961.

## Why Yuri Is Important

Yuri Gagarin's flight was a big day in **history**. He showed the world that people can go to **space**. After Yuri, many other people went into **space**. The Americans went to the moon in 1969. Today, we have a big space station above the **Earth**. People live there for months. We have robots on Mars. We have telescopes that can see far galaxies. All of this started with Yuri. Every year on 12 April, the world celebrates Yuri's Night. People remember the day a young man from a small Russian village became the first **hero** of space. He showed all of us something simple but beautiful: when we look up at the stars,

we are looking at our future.

## Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
<b>space</b>	the place far above the Earth where the stars and planets are
<b>rocket</b>	a long machine that flies very fast up into space
<b>pilot</b>	a person who flies a plane or a spacecraft
<b>planet</b>	a big round thing in space; Earth is a planet
<b>Earth</b>	the planet where we all live
<b>country</b>	a place like Russia, Turkey, or Germany with its own people and government
<b>famous</b>	known by many people
<b>hero</b>	a person who does something brave or very good
<b>fly</b>	to move through the air
<b>dangerous</b>	not safe; can hurt you
<b>land</b>	to come down to the ground from the sky
<b>history</b>	things that happened a long time ago

## Comprehension Quiz

### 1. Who was the first person in space?

- A) Neil Armstrong
- B) Yuri Gagarin
- C) Albert Einstein
- D) Christopher Columbus

### 2. When did Yuri Gagarin go into space?

- A) 12 April 1961
- B) 20 July 1969
- C) 4 October 1957
- D) 25 May 1961

### 3. How long was Yuri's trip in space?

- A) 30 minutes
- B) 108 minutes
- C) Five hours
- D) Two days

### 4. What was the name of the rocket?

- A) Apollo 11
- B) Sputnik
- C) Vostok 1
- D) Soyuz

### 5. What did Yuri say when he saw the Earth from space?

- A) "It is yellow and red."
- B) "It is blue."
- C) "It is so big!"
- D) "It looks like a ball."

## Answer Key

#	Answer	Question
1	<b>B</b>	1. Who was the first person in space?
2	<b>A</b>	2. When did Yuri Gagarin go into space?
3	<b>B</b>	3. How long was Yuri's trip in space?
4	<b>C</b>	4. What was the name of the rocket?
5	<b>B</b>	5. What did Yuri say when he saw the Earth from space?