

Sally Ride

By Sharon Fabian

¹ Sally Ride had skills and the talent, and she loved science. She wasn't afraid to keep studying science, even when other girls decided that science was too hard or when they said that science was a boys' subject. Sally Ride became so good at science that she got to be the first American woman in space.

² As a science student, she had many demanding subjects to study. Space scientists take advanced courses in math and sciences. They study topics like calculus and physics, and that is just the beginning. These are not easy subjects. But when you are studying something you enjoy, it may be hard work, but the hard work is often fun too. Sally Ride must have really enjoyed space science. She went on to get her bachelor's degree, her master's degree, and her doctorate in science. Her field was astrophysics.

³ When she was 27 years old, Sally heard that NASA was looking for young men and women who were experts in science. At the time NASA wanted to hire 35 astronaut candidates. Sally applied for one of the jobs. At the time she wouldn't have had any way of knowing that 8,000 other men and women had applied too. Sally's application was one of the very best. In 1978, she joined NASA and began astronaut training.

⁴ Even though she was a science expert, Sally didn't know much about flying a spacecraft. So she had more subjects to learn. She learned about flying. She learned about navigation. She learned about radio communication. She went through training on weightlessness, water survival, and parachute jumping. Sally must have enjoyed these new subjects that she was learning too. She especially liked flying; it became her new favorite hobby.

⁵ Sally did many different jobs for NASA. She worked as part of the ground crew for two *Columbia* flights in 1981 and 1982. For those flights, she was a communications officer who sent radio messages back and forth between the ground crew and the shuttle itself.

⁶ Sally was chosen to go on a space flight in 1983. She became an astronaut aboard the space shuttle *Challenger*. Her job there was mission specialist. A mission specialist does many different things during a space flight. One of the things Sally did on this flight was to test a robot arm in space. This flight made her famous because she was the first American woman in space. Here is what she had to say about that flight. "I'm sure it was the most fun I'll ever have in my life."

⁷ In 1984, Sally had the chance to go on a second space mission aboard *Challenger*. This time she spent eight days in space. All together, Sally spent 343 hours in space, a place most people can only dream of.

⁸ In 1987, at the age of 36, Sally retired from NASA. She went on to other science jobs at major universities and science centers. She still had a mission, but it wasn't to go into space. Then her mission was to get more girls interested in science and to encourage girls to study science in high school and college. She began an organization to promote girls' interest in science. If you are interested, you can look up Imaginary Lines, Sally Ride Science, or the Sally Ride Club on the Internet. You can find her children's books in the library. Two of them are *To Space and Back* and *Voyager: An Adventure to the Edge of the Solar System*.

⁹ Sadly, Sally Ride died in July 2012 of cancer. She was only 61 years old. Days before her death, her main concern was that Sally Ride Science would continue to inspire young women.

¹⁰ With an approach like Dr. Ride's, most anything you can do with science is fun!



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1. Sally Ride was _____. <input type="radio"/> A The first American in space <input type="radio"/> B The first woman to study science in college <input type="radio"/> C The first woman pilot <input type="radio"/> D The first American woman in space	2. Sally Ride's title became Dr. Ride when _____. <input type="radio"/> A She graduated from college. <input type="radio"/> B She received her doctorate degree. <input type="radio"/> C She graduated from medical school. <input type="radio"/> D She flew in the <i>Challenger</i> .
3. Space scientists need to know a lot of math. <input type="radio"/> A False <input type="radio"/> B True	4. Sally worked as a ground crew communications officer _____. <input type="radio"/> A Before she went to college <input type="radio"/> B After her second space flight <input type="radio"/> C After she retired from NASA <input type="radio"/> D Before she flew in space
5. All together, Sally spent a total of about _____ days in space. <input type="radio"/> A 14 <input type="radio"/> B 10 <input type="radio"/> C 12 <input type="radio"/> D 8	6. The article says that Sally's field was astrophysics. What do you think the word <i>astrophysics</i> means? _____ _____
7. What can you do while you are in middle school and high school to prepare for a career in space science? _____ _____	