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## Space Words

**Before Reading:** As you come across words in bold in "Disaster in Space," ask yourself if you know them or if you can figure them out from context. Then check their meanings here.

1. **catapulted:** "With a deafening roar and a brilliant flare of fiery gas, the rocket **catapulted** Apollo 13 into the sky." (p. 6)  
*Meaning:* threw or launched something through the air
2. **cockpit:** "It was part **cockpit**, part sleeping cabin." (p. 6)  
*Meaning:* the control area in the front of a plane, boat, or spacecraft where the pilot and sometimes the crew sit
3. **engineers:** "After all, they had a team of brilliant flight **engineers** supporting them back at Mission Control in Houston, Texas." (p. 6)  
*Meaning:* people who are specially trained to design and build machines or large structures such as bridges, airplanes, and roads
4. **uncharted:** "And they began training astronauts, 20th-century Christopher Columbuses who would journey into the vast and **uncharted** frontier of space." (p. 7)  
*Meaning:* not recorded or appearing on a map; unexplored
5. **orbit:** "When Apollo 13 started to **orbit** the moon, the LEM would detach and be used as a shuttle to and from the moon's surface." (p. 7)  
*Meaning:* to travel in a circular path around something, such as a planet or moon
6. **detach:** "When Apollo 13 started to orbit the moon, the LEM would **detach** and be used as a shuttle to and from the moon's surface." (p. 7)  
*Meaning:* to separate from something else
7. **meteor:** "Lovell suspected a **meteor** had hit them." (p. 7)  
*Meaning:* a piece of rock or metal from space that speeds into Earth's atmosphere and forms a streak of light as it burns and falls to Earth

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8. **atmosphere:** "Then they would climb back into *Odyssey* for the final plunge through Earth's **atmosphere**, during which the ship would be superheated to 5,000 degrees in the thickening air." (p. 8)

*Meaning:* the mixture of gases surrounding Earth or another planet; the air

9. **incinerated:** "If the astronauts attempted to enter Earth's atmosphere in the LEM, they would be **incinerated.**" (p. 8)

*Meaning:* burned completely

10. **ingenuity:** "With many systems damaged or powered down, the engineers had to use their **ingenuity** to find creative solutions." (p. 8)

*Meaning:* skill or cleverness that allows someone to solve problems and invent things

11. **agonizing:** "The minutes ticked by with **agonizing** slowness." (p. 9)

*Meaning:* causing great pain or suffering

**After Reading:** Now that you have read these vocabulary words in context, check your understanding by using the correct term from the word box to answer each question below.

### WORD BOX

agonizing  
 atmosphere  
 catapulted

cockpit  
 detach  
 engineers

incinerated  
 ingenuity  
 meteors

orbit  
 uncharted

1. What character trait does a person need to think up a brand-new invention? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where does the person in charge of flying a plane sit? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When astronauts blast off from Earth, they pass through a layer of gases before reaching outer space. What is this layer called? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Which word might be used to describe a group of trees after they have been hit by a fierce wildfire?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. When people see a bright light falling through the sky at night, they often mistakenly call it a "shooting star."  
What is it really? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Imagine that a group of explorers finds a new territory that had never been discovered by any human being.  
How might this area be described? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What type of experts might be put in charge of designing a new kind of car? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Like all the planets in our solar system, Earth moves in a loop around the sun. Which word might you use to talk about the path it takes? \_\_\_\_\_
9. If a person were to jump very high on a trampoline, you might say the trampoline  
\_\_\_\_\_ that person toward the sky.
10. Many winter coats have hoods that you can remove by unzipping a zipper. In other words, the hoods  
\_\_\_\_\_ from the coats.
11. How might you describe the experience of waiting in a long line for an ice cream cone on an extremely hot day? \_\_\_\_\_