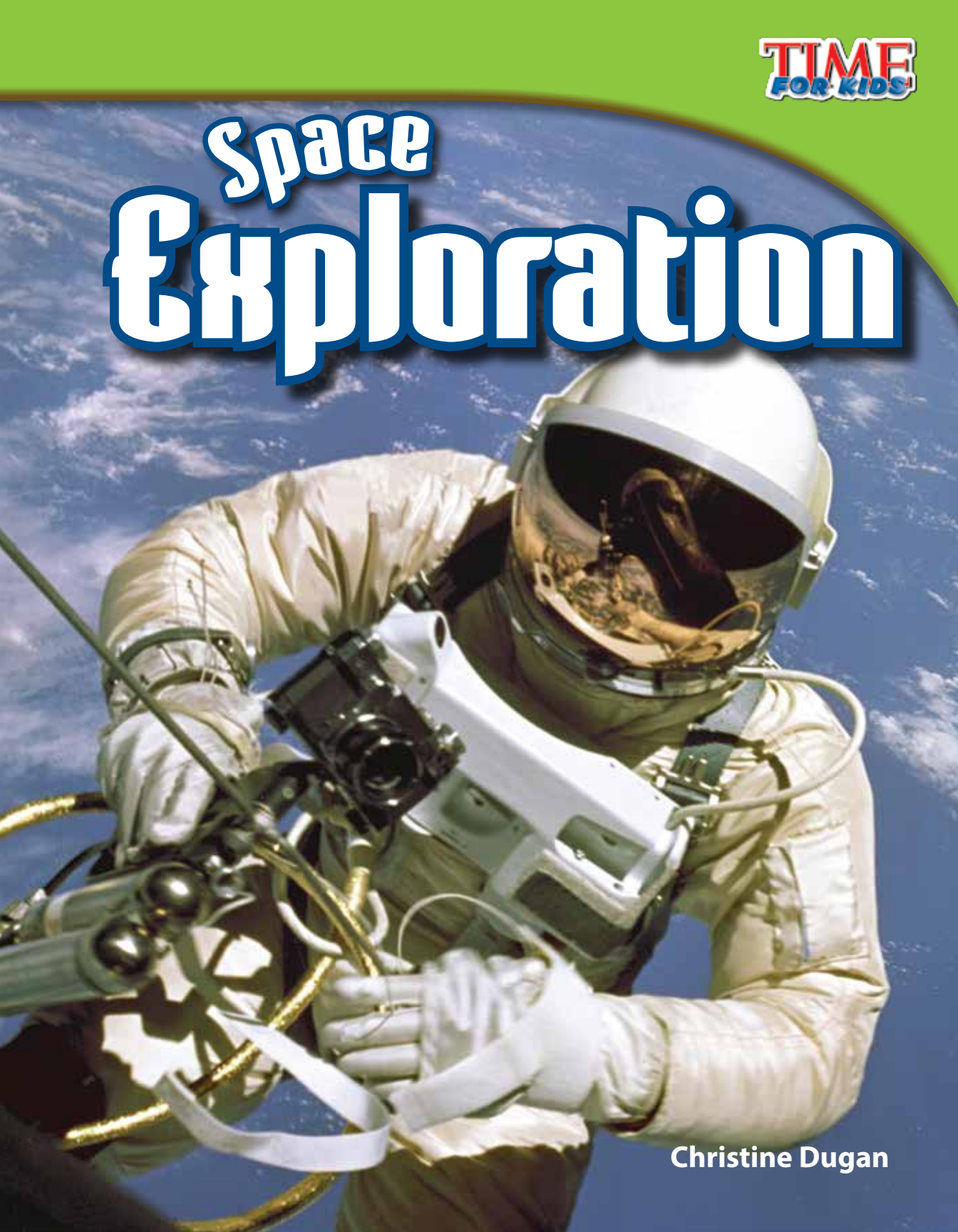

TIME FOR KIDS
Space Exploration
Christine Dugan

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A New World

In 1492, the explorer Christopher Columbus discovered a "New World." The truth is the world had always been there, but it was new to Columbus and his people.

More than 450 years later, most of our planet had been "discovered." But people still wanted to explore, just as Columbus did. So, where else was there to go? Up! People began to explore space.

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▲ Christopher Columbus traveled by ship across the ocean.

Space is a vast, seemingly endless area for people to explore. We have learned much about space over the last few **decades**. But luckily for today's explorers, we still have much more to discover!



Today's explorers use different kinds of ships, but they have the same sense of adventure. ▶

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Early Exploration

Modern space exploration officially began on October 4, 1957. That is when the first man-made **satellite** was launched into space. It was called Sputnik 1, and it was built by the **Soviet Union**. It successfully **orbited** Earth for six months.

On November 3, 1957, the Soviet Union sent Sputnik 2 into space. This time there was a passenger—a dog named Laika. She lived for several days. Sadly, Laika died of **heat exhaustion** caused by rising temperatures in the satellite.

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◀ Sputnik 1

The Soviet Union

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), also called the Soviet Union, was a group of united countries in Asia and Europe. Russia was the largest country in the union. In 1991, the Soviet Union divided into individual countries.

What Is It?

A man-made satellite is an object people place into space to circle Earth, other planets, or the sun.



▲ Ham, a chimpanzee, went into space in 1961.

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Two more dogs were sent into space, but they returned home safely by parachute. Next a chimpanzee named Ham went up. He returned to Earth in perfect health. Four months after Sputnik 1 was launched, the United States sent Explorer 1 to orbit Earth.

In addition to dogs and monkeys, people have sent frogs, mice, fish, bees, flies, ants, sea urchins, and more than 2,000 jellyfish into space! Scientists study these animals to learn about the effects of space on living things.

NASA

People had finally found a way to reach space. Now they hoped to find a way to send humans there. So, in 1958, the United States founded the **National Aeronautics** (air-uh-NAW-tiks) **and Space Administration**, also called **NASA**. Aeronautics is the study, design, and building of aircraft. NASA organized space travel for the United States.

▼the first US astronauts



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In 1961, US President John F. Kennedy offered a challenge. He asked the nation to land a person on the moon by the end of the decade.



▲ President Kennedy was an important supporter of space exploration.

What Does NASA Do?

Scientists and engineers at NASA research space and everything about it. They also help astronauts when they go into space.

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