

SCIENCE NEWS

AT LAST BLAST OFF!



Doug Hurley (far right) and Bob Behnken (second right) with other crew on board the ISS



The SpaceX craft blasts into space to link up with the ISS

Getty

THE SpaceX spacecraft has taken astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) for the first time.

The company's Crew Dragon spacecraft was supposed to launch on Wednesday but it was postponed with just 15 minutes to go, due to bad weather.

However on Saturday (30th May), crowds in Florida, USA, witnessed the spectacular sight of the rocket soaring into a blue sky. It was also watched live around the world.

This was a special and historic flight. It was the first time that astronauts have left Earth from the USA for nine years. Since 2011, NASA has been using Russian rockets to take its astronauts up to the ISS.

It was also the first time that astronauts have been taken into space by a private company.

NASA, the US Government's space agency, bought the seats for the two astronauts in the same way that we buy seats on aeroplanes! Except the cost is thought to be around \$55 million (about £43m) per seat!

On Sunday, the spacecraft successfully docked with the ISS, which orbits the Earth 250 miles above us. The American astronauts will stay there for about three months, carrying out experiments.

SpaceX is owned by the billionaire businessman Elon Musk.

Questions on: 'At last blast off!'

1) Who built the Crew Dragon spacecraft?

2) Why didn't the launch happen on Wednesday 27th May?

3) The launch went ahead on Saturday. When did the spacecraft dock with the International Space Station?

- Later that day
- The next day
- Three days later

4) Can you find the **two reasons** why this was a "historic flight"?

1: _____

2: _____

5) How have American astronauts been getting to the International Space Station for the last nine years?

6) NASA paid SpaceX to take the astronauts to the ISS. What does the journalist compare this to?

7) How much has NASA paid SpaceX for this flight?

- More than £80 million
- £43 million
- £55 million

8) Several companies are planning 'space tourism' – where people pay to have a flight in space.

Do you think this will ever happen and will it be successful?

Would you pay to go into space?