

# Valentina Tereshkova

Valentina Tereshkova is the first woman to have travelled in space. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, she flew the spacecraft Vostok 6 around Earth. In total, she **orbited** the planet 48 times, which took her almost three days.

Valentina was selected from more than 400 others and her mission was to find out how women reacted to **spaceflight**. On her journey, she took some incredible photographs of Earth from space. Some of the pictures showed how the world was suffering from the effects of global warming.

They were then used to help improve scientists' understanding of it.



## Early Life

Valentina's parents came from Belarus, a country in eastern Europe, but Valentina was born in central Russia. When Valentina was two years old, her father left to fight in the Second World War. This left her mother to raise Valentina in a village called Maslennikovo. Valentina left school at just 16 when she discovered her love of skydiving.

In 1959, Valentina made her first jump and it was her skill as a skydiver that eventually led to her being picked as the first space woman.

## Being Picked

Being such a skilful skydiver and having a real interest in politics, Valentina was seen as the ideal person to become a **cosmonaut**. Five women were picked to become cosmonauts but only one of them was needed for the spaceflight. It was up to Valentina to prove that she was the one they wanted.

## Training

The training was really hard and the candidates had to take many physical and mental tests. This included months of weightless flights, long periods on their own and lessons about rockets and space travel. They also completed 120 parachute jumps and trained in jet fighter planes. Training ended with exams and, in 1962, Valentina passed with two of the other candidates.

Valentina was chosen as the Vostok 6 pilot a month before the flight and, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, the spacecraft was ready for launch. After a two-hour countdown, Valentina was launched skywards, becoming the first ever woman in space.

## Quick Facts



**Known for:** First woman in space

**Nationality:** Russian

**Date of birth:** 6<sup>th</sup> March 1937

**Place of birth:** Bolshoye Maslennikovo, Central Russia

**Occupation:** Cosmonaut, politician, engineer

**Spacecraft:** Vostok 6

**Space time:** 2 days, 22 hrs and 50 mins

## The Flight

Being stuck in such a small area, Valentina felt cramped and sick for most of the flight but managed three days in space before returning to Earth.

## Legacy

Out of the five female candidates that trained to become a cosmonaut, only Valentina made it in to space. 19 years later, in 1982, Svetlana Savitskaya joined Valentina in the record books when she became the second woman in space aboard Soyuz T-7.

During her life, Valentina married twice. Her first husband was also a cosmonaut and, in 1964, they had a daughter, Elena. Elena was the first person in the world whose parents had both been to space!

As well as being a cosmonaut, Valentina was an engineer and politician during her working life. Now retired, she remains an inspiration to men and women throughout the world.

## Awards

- Hero of the Soviet Union
- Order 'For Merit to the Fatherland'
- Order of Lenin
- Order of the October Revolution
- Order of Alexander Nevsky
- Order of Honour
- Order of Friendship



## Glossary

**cosmonaut:** A Russian astronaut.

**orbited:** Having circled the Earth.

**spaceflight:** A journey through space.

# Questions

1. Valentina Tereshkova is the first woman to have... Tick one.

- flown for almost three days.
- had parents from Belarus.
- travelled in space.
- been born in central Russia.

2. What was Valentina's mission?

---

3. Why were Valentina's photos of Earth useful?

---

---

4. What do you think it was like for Valentina's mother raising her daughter? Give reasons in your answer.

---

---

---

5. Look at the section, **Being Picked**. Summarise this section in your own words.

---

---

---

6. How long **exactly** did Valentina spend on the space flight?

---

---

---

# Questions

7. Number these events 1 – 5 to show the order that they happen in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- Valentina left school at just 16.
- Svetlana Savitskaya became the second woman in space.
- Valentina had her daughter, Elena.
- 1 Valentina was selected from more than 400 others.
- Valentina trained in jet fighter planes.

8. If you were to meet Valentina Tereshkova, what would you like to ask or say to her? Give two answers.

---

---

---

# Answers

1. Valentina Tereshkova is the first woman to have... Tick one.

- flown for almost three days.
- had parents from Belarus.
- travelled in space.**
- been born in central Russia.

2. What was Valentina's mission?

**Valentina's mission was to find out how women reacted to space flight.**

3. Why were Valentina's photos of Earth useful?

**Valentina's photos of Earth were useful because they showed how the world was suffering from global warming, which helped the scientists.**

4. What do you think it was like for Valentina's mother raising her daughter? Give reasons in your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: It must have been hard for Valentina's mother as her husband was away at war and she had to bring up her child on her own. She must have felt really proud when her daughter became the first woman in space.**

5. Look at the section, **Being Picked**. Summarise this section in your own words.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Because she was such an excellent skydiver and was interested in politics, Valentina was chosen to be a cosmonaut. She had to battle it out with four other candidates but she was determined to prove she was the best.**

6. How long **exactly** did Valentina spend on the space flight?

**Valentina spent 2 days, 22 hours and 50 minutes on the space flight.**

# Answers

7. Number these events 1 – 5 to show the order that they happen in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- 2 Valentina left school at just 16.
- 5 Svetlana Savitskaya became the second woman in space.
- 4 Valentina had her daughter, Elena.
- 1 Valentina was selected from more than 400 others.
- 3 Valentina trained in jet fighter planes.

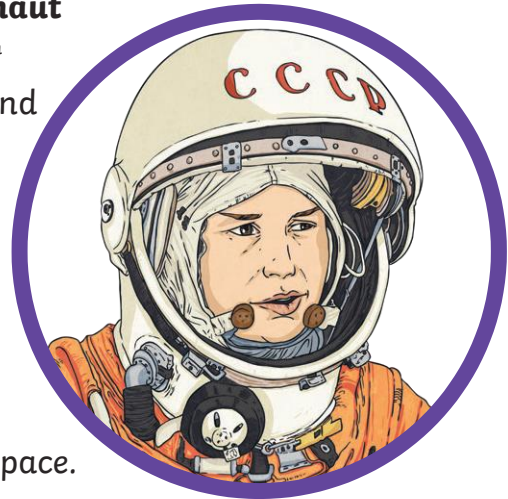
8. If you were to meet Valentina Tereshkova, what would you like to ask or say to her? Give two answers.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to ask Valentina what it was like to be the first woman to travel in space and why she wanted to do it in the first place.**

# Valentina Tereshkova

Valentina Tereshkova is a retired Russian **cosmonaut** who was the first woman to fly in space. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, she flew the spacecraft Vostok 6 around Earth. In total, she orbited the planet 48 times, which took her almost three days.

Valentina was selected from more than 400 others and her mission was to find out how the female body reacted to spaceflight. She controlled the spacecraft, kept a flight log and took some incredible photographs of Earth from space. Some of the pictures showed how the world was suffering from the effects of global warming and have been used by scientists to improve their understanding of it.



## Early Life

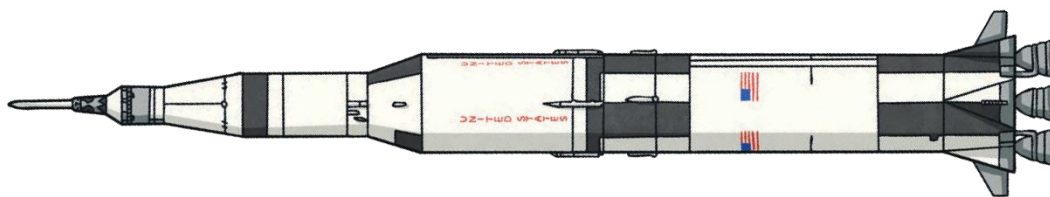
Although her parents came from **Belarus**, Valentina was born in central Russia and grew up in a village called Maslennikovo. Her father was a tractor driver and an army tank leader who fought in the Second World War, while her mother worked in a **textile plant**. Valentina left school at just 16 when she discovered her passion for skydiving.

In 1959, when she was 22, Valentina made her first jump and it was her skill as a skydiver that eventually led to her being picked as a cosmonaut.

## Space Training

Valentina was interested in politics and the communist idea that everyone in society should be treated equally. This brought her to the attention of the **Soviet Space Programme**. Being such a skilful skydiver and having joined the **Young Communist League** when she was younger – as well as having a war hero as a father – Valentina was seen as the ideal candidate to join the cosmonaut corps.

Five women were picked in total but only one of them was needed for the spaceflight. It was up to Valentina to prove that she was the one they wanted.

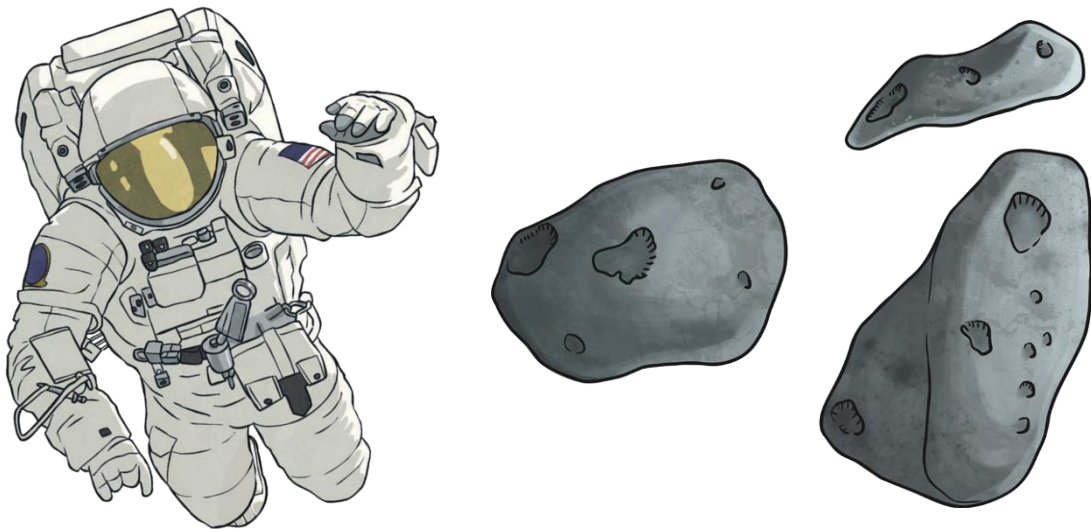


The training was intense and the candidates had to take many physical and mental tests. This included months of weightless flights, long periods on their own and lessons in rocket theory and spacecraft engineering. They also undertook 120 parachute jumps and trained in jet fighter planes. Training concluded with exams and, in 1962, Valentina passed with two of the other candidates.

The State Space Commission chose Valentina as the Vostok 6 pilot a month before the flight and, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, Vostok 6 was ready for launch. After a two-hour countdown, the spacecraft launched into the atmosphere. The mission was a success and, within minutes, Valentina had become the first woman in space.

### The Flight

Being confined to such a small area, Valentina felt cramped and sick for most of the flight but managed three days in space before returning to Earth.



### Quick Facts



**Known for:** First woman in space

**Nationality:** Russian

**Date of birth:** 6<sup>th</sup> March 1937

**Place of birth:** Bolshoye Maslennikovo, Central Russia

**Occupation:** Cosmonaut, politician, engineer

**Spacecraft:** Vostok 6

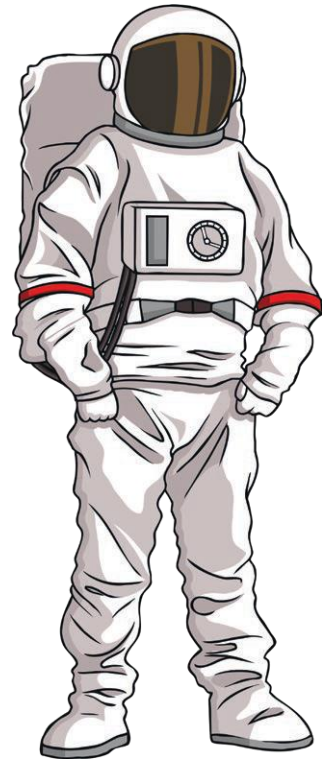
**Space time:** 2 days, 22 hrs and 50 mins

## Legacy

Out of the five female candidates that trained to become a cosmonaut, only Valentina made it into space. 19 years later, in 1982, Svetlana Savitskaya joined Valentina in the record books when she became the second woman in space aboard Soyuz T-7.

During her life, Valentina married twice. Her first husband was also a cosmonaut and, in 1964, they had a daughter, Elena. Elena was the first person in the world whose parents had both been to space!

As well as being a cosmonaut, Valentina was an engineer and politician during her working life. Now retired, she remains an inspiration to men and women throughout the world.



## Awards

- Hero of the Soviet Union
- Order 'For Merit to the Fatherland'
- Order of Lenin
- Order of the October Revolution
- Order of Alexander Nevsky
- Order of Honour
- Order of Friendship



## Glossary

**Belarus:** An eastern European country.

**cosmonaut:** A Russian astronaut

**Soviet:** From a group of countries which used to be called the Soviet Union.

**textile plant:** A factory that produces cloth or fabric.

**Young Communist League:** A group of young people that believe in communist ideas.

# Questions

1. Who was Valentina Tereshkova and what was she the first to do?

---

2. Valentina took some incredible photographs of Earth from space. What do you think made them so incredible?

---

---

---

3. What was the only award Valentina received that wasn't an Order?

---

4. What did Valentina do in 1959?

---

5. What do you think the **Soviet Space Programme** was?

---

---

---

6. From what you have read in the text, which **two** words best describe Valentina Tereshkova?

- organised
- determined
- skilful
- happy
- shrewd

7. Number these events 1 – 5 to show the order that they are first mentioned in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- Soyuz T-7 was launched.
- 1 She filled in a log.
- Her father drove a tractor and a tank.
- She joined the Cosmonaut Corps.
- The State Space Commission chose her as the Vostok 6 pilot.

8. **Now retired, she remains an inspiration to men and women throughout the world.**

Why is Valentina an inspiration?

---

---

---

9. If Valentina had any regrets about the space flight what do you think they may have been? Explain why you think this.

---

---

---

# Answers

1. Who was Valentina Tereshkova and what was she the first to do?

**Valentina Tereshkova was a Russian cosmonaut and she was the first woman to travel in space.**

2. Valentina took some incredible photographs of Earth from space.

What do you think made them so incredible?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: They must have been incredible to look at as they showed Earth from outer space which would have looked amazing and there probably weren't that many around. They also helped scientists understand the effects of global warming.**

3. What was the only award Valentina received that wasn't an Order?

**The only award Valentina received that wasn't an Order was Hero of the Soviet Union.**

4. What did Valentina do in 1959?

**Valentina made her first skydive jump in 1959, which led to her being picked as a cosmonaut.**

5. What do you think the **Soviet Space Programme** was?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the Soviet Space Programme was probably a Russian government department that dealt with everything to do with space travel, including finding female cosmonauts.**

6. From what you have read in the text, which **two** words best describe Valentina Tereshkova?

- organised
- determined**
- skilful**
- happy
- shrewd

7. Number these events 1 – 5 to show the order that they are first mentioned in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- 5** Soyuz T-7 was launched.
- 1** She filled in a log.
- 2** Her father drove a tractor and a tank.
- 3** She joined the Cosmonaut Corps.
- 4** The State Space Commission chose her as the Vostok 6 pilot.

8. Now retired, she remains an inspiration to men and women throughout the world.

Why is Valentina an inspiration?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Valentina is an inspiration as she was the first woman to go into space. She is proof that with hard work, skill and dedication you can achieve anything.**

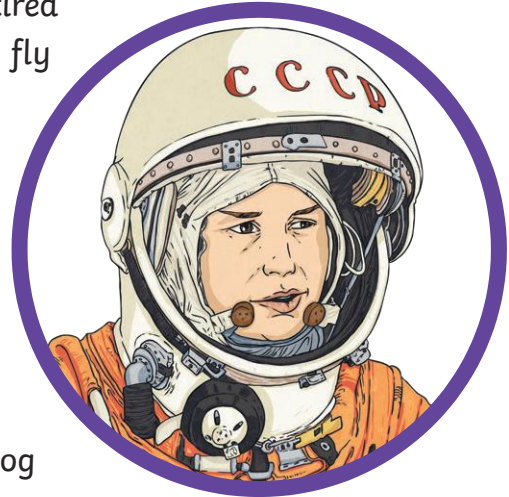
9. If Valentina had any regrets about the space flight what do you think they may have been? Explain why you think this

**Pupils' own responses, such as: After working so hard to become the first woman in space, Valentina may have regretted that it took another 19 years for another woman to follow in her footsteps.**

# Valentina Tereshkova

Valentina Vladimirovna Tereshkova is a retired Russian **cosmonaut** who was the first woman to fly in space. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, she piloted the spacecraft Vostok 6, orbiting Earth 48 times over a period of almost three days before returning home.

After being selected from more than 400 others, Valentina's mission was mainly to find out how the female body reacted to spaceflight. She also controlled the spacecraft, kept a flight log and took some incredible photographs of Earth from space. Some of these were used to identify aerosol layers within Earth's atmosphere, helping scientists to understand the effects of global warming.



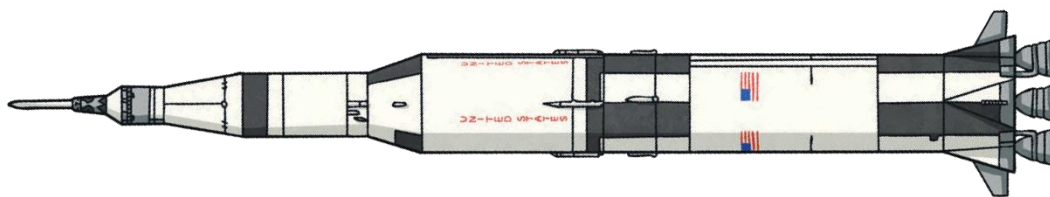
## Early Life

A daughter of **Belarussian** parents, it wasn't immediately obvious that Valentina would grow up to be such a **pioneering** space explorer. Born in central Russia, Valentina grew up in a village called Maslennikovo. Her father was a tractor driver and an army tank leader who fought in the Second World War, while her mother worked in a textile plant. Having started school aged eight, Valentina left when she was just 16 as she had discovered her passion for skydiving.

In 1959, while working in a local factory as a textile worker, Valentina made her first jump. She was 22 and it was her skill as a skydiver that eventually led to her being picked as a cosmonaut.

## Space Training

Valentina's involvement in politics brought her to the attention of the **Soviet** Space Programme. Being such a skilful skydiver and having joined the Young **Communist** League when she was younger – as well as having a war hero as a father – Valentina was seen as the ideal candidate to join the cosmonaut corps.



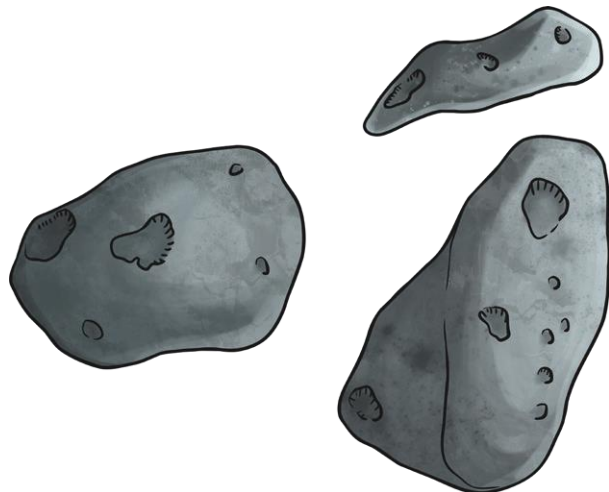
Five women were picked in total but only one of them was needed for the spaceflight. It was up to Valentina to prove that she was the one they wanted.

The training was intense, with the candidates undertaking many physical and mental tests. This included months of weightless flights, periods in isolation and lessons in rocket theory and spacecraft engineering. They also undertook 120 parachute jumps and trained in MiG-15UTI jet fighters. Training concluded with exams and, in 1962, Valentina passed with two of the other candidates, Irina Solovyova and Valentina Ponomaryova.

The State Space Commission nominated Valentina as the Vostok 6 pilot a month before the flight and, on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1963, Vostok 6 was ready for launch. After being sealed inside the Vostok capsule for a two-hour countdown, the spacecraft launched into the atmosphere. The mission went without fault and, within minutes, Valentina had become the first woman in space.

### The Flight

Being confined to such a small space, Valentina felt cramped and sick for the majority of the flight but managed to survive the three days until her return to Earth.



### Quick Facts



**Known for:** First woman in space

**Nationality:** Russian

**Date of birth:** 6<sup>th</sup> March 1937

**Place of birth:** Bolshoye Maslennikovo, Central Russia

**Occupation:** Cosmonaut, politician, engineer

**Spacecraft:** Vostok 6

**Space time:** 2 days, 22 hrs and 50 mins

## Legacy

Out of the five female candidates that trained to become a cosmonaut, only Valentina actually made it in to space and it took 19 years for anyone to follow in her footsteps. In 1982, Svetlana Savitskaya joined Valentina in the record books when she became the second woman in space aboard Soyuz T-7.

During her life, Valentina married twice. Her first husband, Andriyan Nikolayev, was also a cosmonaut and, in 1964, they had a daughter, Elena. Elena was the first person alive whose parents have both travelled in space!

As well as being a cosmonaut, Valentina was an engineer and politician during her working life. Now retired, she remains an inspiration not only to women but to men, budding space travellers and scientists throughout the world.



## Awards

- Hero of the Soviet Union
- Order 'For Merit to the Fatherland'
- Order of Lenin
- Order of the October Revolution
- Order of Alexander Nevsky
- Order of Honour
- Order of Friendship



## Glossary

**Belarussian:** A native of the country Belarus.

**Communist:** A political point of view with the belief that everything should be shared equally.

**cosmonaut:** A Russian astronaut.

**pioneering:** Involving new ideas.

**Soviet:** From a group of countries which used to be called the Soviet Union.

# Questions

1. Who was Valentina Tereshkova and what was she the first to do?

---

2. Pretend you are Valentina Tereshkova and you are aboard Vostok 6 orbiting the Earth. What might you write down in your log book?

---

---

---

3. **It wasn't immediately obvious that Valentina would grow up to be such a pioneering space explorer.**

From what you have read in the text, why do you think this was?

---

---

---

4. Why is **pioneering** a good word to describe Valentina?

---

---

---

5. What made Valentina the ideal candidate to join the Cosmonaut Corps? Tick **three**.

- her political views
- who her parents were
- her piloting skills
- her photography skills
- her skydiving skills

# Questions

6. **Training included months of weightless flights, periods in isolation and lessons in rocket theory and spacecraft engineering. They also undertook 120 parachute jumps and trained in MiG-15UTI jet fighters.**

Pick two of these and explain why you think this was part of the training for being a cosmonaut.

---



---



---

7. How long did Valentina's space flight last for?

---

8. Match these names to the correct statement.

Svetlana Savitskaya

Andriyan Nikolayev

Valentina Tereshkova

Elena Nikolayev

● Valentina' first husband

● Valentina's daughter

● the second woman in space

● a Cosmonaut Corpcandidate

9. If Valentina had any regrets about the space flight what do you think they may have been? Explain why you think this.

---



---



---

10. **Now retired, she remains an inspiration not only to women but to men, budding space travellers and scientists throughout the world.**

Why do you think Valentina remains an inspiration to both women and men?

---



---



---

# Answers

1. Who was Valentina Tereshkova and what was she the first to do?

**Valentina Tereshkova was a Russian cosmonaut and she was the first woman to travel in space.**

2. Pretend you are Valentina Tereshkova and you are aboard Vostok 6 orbiting the Earth. What might you write down in your log book?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Wow, what an incredible few hours. I've just seen the whole of the African continent rotate past and I took so many incredible photos. I've just adjusted a few controls to maintain oxygen levels and I'm about to travel over Russia! I hope the scientists back home can make sense of these strange layers that I'm seeing covering the planet...**

3. It wasn't immediately obvious that Valentina would grow up to be such a pioneering space explorer.

From what you have read in the text, why do you think this was?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Her mother worked in a textile plant and her father, although a war hero, was a tractor driver. It wasn't as if they were rich and had interests in space travel or connections with the State Space Commission. So, from a young age, it wouldn't have been obvious that Valentina would grow up to be a space explorer.**

4. Why is **pioneering** a good word to describe Valentina?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Pioneering means to be first to do something or take on a new idea.**

5. What made Valentina the ideal candidate to join the Cosmonaut Corps? Tick **three**.

- her political views**
- who her parents were**
- her piloting skills
- her photography skills
- her skydiving skills**

# Answers

6. Training included months of weightless flights, periods in isolation and lessons in rocket theory and spacecraft engineering. They also undertook 120 parachute jumps and trained in MiG-15UTI jet fighters.

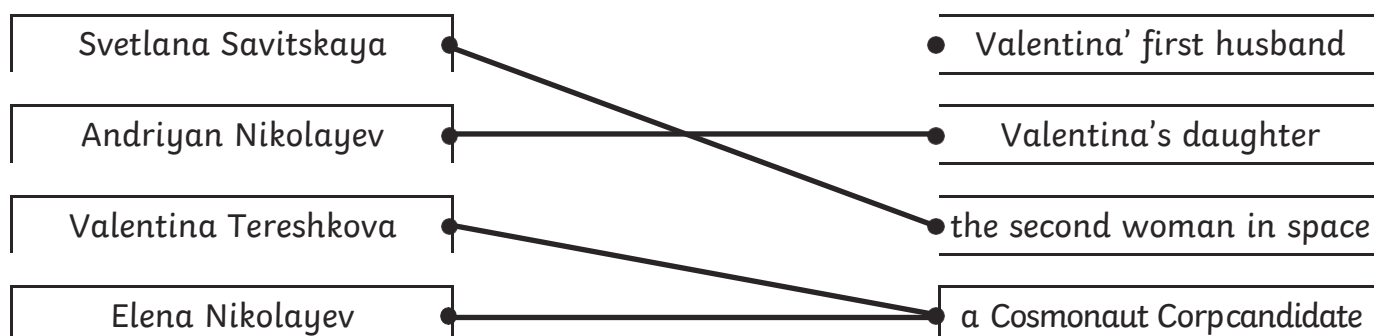
Pick two of these and explain why you think this was part of the training for being a cosmonaut.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: They would have needed to practise periods in isolation because the cosmonauts would be spending a lot of time alone in space. They would also need to practice weightless flights because there is no gravity in space and they would need to get used to it.**

7. How long did Valentina's space flight last for?

**Valentina's spaceflight lasted for 2 days, 22 hours and 50 minutes.**

8. Match these names to the correct statement.



9. If Valentina had any regrets about the space flight what do you think they may have been? Explain why you think this.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: After working so hard to become the first woman in space, Valentina may have regretted that it took another 19 years for another woman to follow in her footsteps.**

10. Now retired, she remains an inspiration not only to women but to men, budding space travellers and scientists throughout the world.

Why do you think Valentina remains an inspiration to both women and men?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Valentina is an inspiration to everyone as she was the first woman to go into space. She is proof that with hard work, skill and dedication you can achieve anything, whether you are a man or a woman.**