Apollo 11 Lands on the Moon

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

On May 25, 1961, President John F. Kennedy set a goal for the nation: to land a crew on the Moon and return it to Earth. Apollo 11 launched from Cape Kennedy on July 16, 1969, to complete that goal. It carried Commander Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin. Collins piloted the command module, Columbia, while Armstrong and Aldrin would ride the lunar module, Eagle, down to the surface. The word lunar means "of the Moon."

On July 20, Eagle separated from Columbia. Armstrong flew part of the landing by hand, steering to avoid a crater near the end, and Eagle touched down in a place called the Sea of Tranquility. Hours later, Armstrong stepped onto the Moon, and about 20 minutes after that, Aldrin followed him. An estimated 650 million people watched Armstrong on television and heard him describe the moment as "one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

The two astronauts moved as far as 300 feet from Eagle. Aldrin set up science experiments, and both men gathered samples of the Moon's surface to bring back to Earth. They left behind a silicon disk holding goodwill messages from 73 countries. Armstrong and Aldrin spent 21 hours, 36 minutes on the Moon's surface before Eagle carried them back up to Columbia and Collins. On July 24, 1969, Apollo 11 splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, 13 miles from the recovery ship USS Hornet. The goal had been met.

1. **What goal did Apollo 11 complete, and who had set it?**

2. **What does "splashed down" mean in the last paragraph? What in the sentence shows it?**

3. **Why does the author begin with President Kennedy's goal from 1961?**

4. **Collins never walked on the Moon. Was his part still important? Support your answer with details from the passage.**

Answer key

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1. What goal did Apollo 11 complete, and who had set it?
   To land a crew on the Moon and return it to Earth. President John F. Kennedy set the goal on May 25, 1961.

2. What does “splashed down” mean in the last paragraph? What in the sentence shows it?
   It means the spacecraft came down into the water. The sentence says it splashed down in the Pacific Ocean, 13 miles from a recovery ship.

3. Why does the author begin with President Kennedy’s goal from 1961?
   To show why the mission was planned. The last sentence comes back to the goal to show that Apollo 11 met it.

4. Collins never walked on the Moon. Was his part still important? Support your answer with details from the passage.
   Sample answer: Yes. Collins piloted Columbia, and Eagle had to carry Armstrong and Aldrin back up to Columbia before the crew could return to Earth. Without Collins and Columbia, the goal could not have been met.