



CEFR Graded Vocabulary & Academic Word List Content

CEFR Graded Vocabulary

A1: 54%

A2: 15%

B1: 6%

B2: 5%

C1: 1%

C2: 1%

1. Jeffrey Bezos, **you did it. Yesterday the planet's richest person became space's wealthiest tourist**, blasting **off in his New Shepard capsule** — a spunky, workmanlike hunk **of metal described on Twitter as a "gumdrop-shaped capsule" and a "dong rocket"** — **52 years to the day that Neil Armstrong placed his boots on the moon.**

2. **"Best. Day. Ever"**, **said Bezos, after his 11-minute trip to the edge of space.** Bezos, **his brother Mark**, **82-year-old aeronautics legend Wally Funk and 18-year-old Oliver Daemen** — **the youngest and oldest people to go to space respectively** — **made it back to West Texas in one piece.**

3. **Indeed, the billionaire space race is hotting up. Last week, Richard Branson's big shiny space Virgin Galactic rocket plane made it 53.4 miles up to the edge of space. With five colleagues, the 70-year-old soared above the Earth on VSS Unity.** **"Welcome to the dawn of a new space age," Branson said.** **"It's been the experience of a lifetime... I've dreamed of this moment since I was a kid but honestly, nothing can prepare you for the view of Earth from space. It's just magical."** **Branson's space crusade came nine days before Bezos blasted off on the first crewed flight by his rocket company, Blue Origin. Not to be outdone by Branson — merely the world's 589th richest**

4. **If you think this won't be a point of contention between adult CEOs with the power of space flight at their cheque-writing fingertips, think again.** **"Jeff who?"**, **Branson replied, when asked if he was trying to pip Bezos to the punch.**

5. **Mileage, minutes, and clicks are big factors in the space spat — every space billionaire needs a vast online audience watching his live streams, after all. Slick websites keep legions of Earthbound fans in the loop. In June, Bezos announced his trip to one million people via an Instagram video.** **"Ever since I was five years old, I've dreamed of travelling to space." In the video, Bezos, wearing a cowboy hat and aviators, drink in hand, walks up to his younger brother Mark and says, "I really want you to come to space with me"** **. Chances are you might have helped him achieve his dream:** **"I want to thank every Amazon employee, and every Amazon customer, because you guys paid for all this."**



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6. **Their crew were joined by** Daemen, **the son of** millionaire Dutch **businessmen** (a **mystery** bidder **who spent** 28 **million on a ticket pulled out with** “**scheduling conflicts**” and will go later, **leaving a seat open for** Daemen), and Funk, **the veteran US pilot**, 82, **who was one of the most promising female candidates for the** Mercury 13 **programme, before** NASA **closed it in** 1962. **In an** Instagram **video, the** Amazon **founder asked** Funk **how she would feel to leave the planet. She threw her arms around him and** squealed:

“I would say, **Honey, that was the best thing that ever happened to me!**”

“**If The Breakfast Club had the brain, the jock, the basket case, the princess, and the criminal, this Blue Origin flight has the boss, the tag-along, the real deal, and the kid, says** **The Atlantic’s** Marina Koren.

7. **But this** billionaire **space race is not just a click measuring contest. Great leaps forward are being made. The best work to date has been done by** Elon Musk’s **Space X. His craft are unusual in that they are reusable, and reliably so. On April 16** Nasa **awarded him** 2.9bn **to develop a** lunar lander **as part of America’s plan to return** astronaut **s to the Moon by** 2024. Bezos, **who plans to step down as** Amazon CEO **this summer to devote more time to space, was reportedly** “livid”. **His bid to fly** Nasa **to the moon was** spurned. Musk poked **fun by pointing out that, unlike** SpaceX, **Blue Origin has made only** suborbital **flights so far**, tweeting: “**Can’t get it up** (to orbit) lol.”

8. **The** Tesla **boss, 50, is also making real money.** Nifty Falcon 9 **rockets already ferry other company’s satellites up to** orbit **regularly for** 62 **million a pop. His own** Starlink **satellite chains will be the biggest satellite network ever, beaming fast internet access to every corner of the planet. The** punchier Dragon **rocket has** ferried **crews of up to seven up to the International Space Station, and there are plans to take non-**astronauts **to the moon by the end of the year. But** Dragon **is only half the size of** Starship, Musk’s **jewel in the Space X crown — the vehicle he expects to take man to** Mars. **A super-heavy, spectacularly silver** prototype **successfully roared** 10km **into the** Texas **sky in May and landed, for once, without blowing up. Despite its vast size, it is fully** reusable, **and is intended to be far cheaper than** SpaceX’s **current rockets.** Musk **hopes** Starship **could end up costing less than** 2 **million per launch.**

9. **But for now, the headlines belong to a** gurning Branson, **and** Bezos — **the first** billionaires **to boldly float** weightlessly **where no** billionaires **have floated** weightlessly **before. Viewers at home even imagined** Bezos’s **ex-wife** Mackenzie Scott **was pleased:** “**Hard to imagine a better divorce outcome than getting** 50 **billion dollars and then your ex literally leaves the planet**”, tweeted **one. But here’s looking at you, rich kids.**



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Academic Word List Content

AWL 2% Off List 98%

- 1 **access**
- 1 **achieve**
- 1 **adult**
- 1 **colleagues**
- 1 **conflicts**
- 1 **despite**
- 1 **devote**
- 1 **factors**
- 1 **founder**
- 2 **me**
- 1 **network**
- 1 **outcome**
- 1 **reliably**
- 1 **scheduling**
- 1 **vehicle**
- 1 **via**