

Dr Mae Jemison

A Biography of an Astronaut

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Mae Carol Jemison (Date of Birth: 17-10-56)

Mae Carol Jemison is a scientist, a doctor and an astronaut. She was the first African American woman to travel into space.

Mae was born in Alabama, USA. Her mother was a teacher, and her father was a carpenter. Mae is the youngest of three children.



Did you know? Mae worked for NASA, which stands for National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Early Life



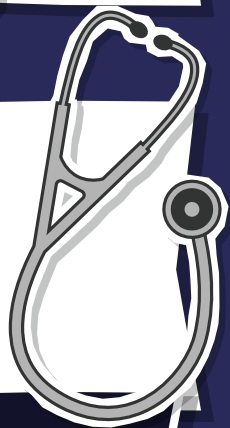
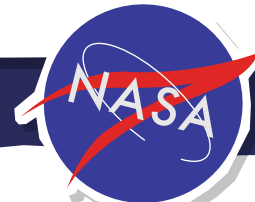
Mae's family moved to Chicago, USA, when she was three years old. "Growing up, I was just like any other kid. I loved space, stars and dinosaurs." Mae loved science from a very early age, and her parents encouraged her interest.

"My parents were the best scientists I knew because they were always asking questions."

Mae worked hard at school, and she was very clever. She left high school and went to university at the age of sixteen.



Education and Training



Mae studied both science and medicine at university. She became a doctor in 1981. She worked as a doctor in West Africa for a few years before deciding in 1985 that she wanted to be an astronaut. Mae joined NASA's training programme in 1987.

Fun fact. Mae loved dancing, and she went to lots of different dance classes. She didn't want to choose between science and dancing. Mae's mum told her, "You can always dance if you're a doctor, but you can't doctor if you're a dancer."

The Endeavour

Mae travelled on a Space Shuttle called the Endeavour. The Endeavour flew 300 kilometres (km) above Earth. The astronauts didn't feel the pull of gravity from Earth because the shuttle orbited it at speeds of 28,000 km per hour! Mae travelled over 5 million kilometres in total during her trip. It's hard to imagine travelling so far and so fast!

Did you know? Mae's Space Shuttle was named after Captain Cook's ship Bark Endeavour. The Bark Endeavour was the first ship to reach the east coast of Australia in 1770.

Mae's Mission

Mae went on a Space Shuttle mission that orbited Earth for nearly eight days. The Endeavour contained a space lab where Mae could do experiments. While on board the Endeavour, Mae ran experiments to answer the following questions:

- What are the effects of zero gravity on human bones?
- Why can being in space make you feel sick?
- How do tadpoles and other animals grow and develop in space?



Fun fact. Mae speaks four languages: English, Japanese, Russian and Swahili.

Life After NASA

Mae left NASA in 1993. She became a teacher at a university called Dartmouth College. She also set up her own company called the Jemison Group. The Jemison Group develops science and technology for daily life. Mae has written a book for children called 'Find Where The Wind Goes,' which is about her life. She has continued working hard to help children from all backgrounds to study science.

Fun fact. Mae is a huge fan of the science fiction show Star Trek. She even appeared in an episode of the show in 1993!

