

# Yuri Gagarin's First Speech About His Flight Into Space

Yuri Gagarin  
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*Four days after Yuri Gagarin returned from his flight, the Soviet government held a press conference during which he addressed his country and the world. The speech, and his introduction by Soviet scientist A.N. Nesmeyanov were faithfully recorded by a NASA translator. We present an excerpt of the intro and all of Gagarin's speech below.*

*A.N. Nesmeyanov: "Everything is symbolic in this achievement. The fact that the first cosmonaut is a Soviet citizen, the fact that the first cosmic spaceship carrying Major Gagarin was named 'Vostok,' which means East or Dawn, and also the fact that the flight was completed in the morning, these are all symbolic. So this morning became the morning of a new era. From now on the day of April 12, 1961, will be connected with the achievement which was accomplished by Yuri Alekseyevitch Gagarin. The entire flight around the Earth was completed in 108 minutes, and these minutes shook the world."*

Many people are interested in my biography. I have read in the newspapers that some irresponsible persons in the United States of America, who are distant relatives of the Gagarin nobility, consider that I am one of their offsprings. I will have to disillusion them. They have acted very stupidly. I am a simple Soviet man. I was born March 9, 1934, to the family of a peasant. The place of my birth was in the Smolensk region. There were no princes or nobility in my family tree. Before the revolution my parents were poor peasants. The older generation of my family, my grandfather and grandmother, were also poor peasants, and there were no princes or counts in our family. Therefore, I will be forced to disillusion my self-appointed relatives in America.

I attended grade school, then a manual school in Lyubertsy near Moscow. After that, I went to the Saratov Industrial Technicum to become a smelting designer.

However, my oldest dream was to become a pilot. At the time of my graduation from that technicum in 1955, I simultaneously completed studies at the Saratov Aeroclub. I was next accepted to the Orenburg Aviation School, from which I graduated in 1957

and was granted the title of Air Force Fighter Pilot. I served with one of the branches of the Soviet Armed Forces.

At my own request, I was accepted as a candidate to become a cosmonaut of the Soviet Union. As you can see, after the selection I became a cosmonaut.

I passed through a proper preparation period which was designed by our scientists. This was described in detail by the president of our Academy of Sciences. I successfully passed all preparations, learned the necessary technique and was ready for a cosmic flight.

I am very happy and immensely thankful to our party and our government for entrusting me with this flight. I have completed this flight in the name of our Fatherland, in the name of the great Soviet people, and the communist party of the Soviet Union.

Before the flight I was in good health and felt very well. I had complete assurance in the success of this flight. Our technique is very reliable and I, as well as my comrades, scientists, engineers and technicians did not doubt for a minute its successful completion.

My state-of-being during the flight was superb. During the active portion, when the spaceship was injected into orbit, the effects of gravitation, vibration and noise, as well as other factors of the cosmic flight, did not have any bearing on my condition. I was able to work productively in accordance with the program which was assigned for this flight. After injection into orbit, when the carrier rocket was separated, a state of weightlessness began. In the beginning this feeling was somewhat unpleasant, in spite of the fact that, before the flight, I was subjected to short periods of weightlessness. However, it didn't take long at all, and as I became used to this condition, I continued to carry out the program.

In my own opinion, the effect of weightlessness has no influence on the normal state of the organism and on the physiological functions of a human organism.

During the flight, I ate and drank water, maintaining a continuous radio contact with the Earth over several channels, as well as over the telephone and telegraph. I observed the surrounding area, I followed the operation of the installations aboard the spaceship, I reported to Earth and recorded observations and other data in my log book as well as on a tape recorder. My state of being during the entire period of weightlessness was superb.

Then, in accordance with the flight program the command was given for descent. The spaceship was automatically adjusted, the braking installation was activated and the speed of flight began to decrease. The ship landed safely, and it gave me a great pleasure to meet immediately my own Soviet people. The landing took place at a

preselected area in our country.

I would like to tell you a little bit about what I observed.

The view of the Earth from an altitude of 175-300 km is very sharp. The Earth's surface looks approximately the same as seen from a high-flying jet plane. Clearly distinctive are large mountain ranges, large rivers, large forest areas, shorelines and islands.

The clouds which cover the Earth's surface are very visible, and their shadow on the Earth can be seen distinctly. The color of the sky is completely black. The stars on this black background seem to be somewhat brighter and clearer. The Earth is surrounded by a characteristic blue halo. This halo is particularly visible at the horizon. From a light-blue coloring, the sky blends into a beautiful deep blue, then dark blue, violet, and finally complete black.

When I left the Earth's shadow, the Sun's rays penetrated the Earth's atmosphere. At this point, the Earth's horizon was dark blue, violet and finally black.

The transition into the Earth's shadow took place very rapidly. Darkness comes instantly and nothing can be seen. Obviously, the spaceship passed over the ocean during this period of time. If the spaceship would have passed over large cities, then I would have probably been able to see the lights of those cities. The stars were well visible.

The exit from the Earth's shadow is also rapid and sharp.

Because I was prepared for it, the influence of the cosmic flight factors were endured very well. Now I feel excellent.

I would like to praise here our Soviet designers, engineers and technicians, as well as the entire Soviet nation, for creating the remarkable spaceship "Vostok," its remarkable equipment and powerful carrier rocket which has placed such a huge spaceship in orbit.

I am immensely glad that my beloved fatherland was the first in history to penetrate cosmos. The first airplane, the first satellite, the first cosmic spaceship and the first manned flight into space, these are the stages on the great road of my fatherland toward the conquest of the mysteries of nature.

We plan to fly some more and intend to conquer cosmic space as it should be done.

Personally, I would like to fly some more into space. I like flying. My biggest wish is to fly toward Venus, toward Mars, which is really flying.

**Yuri Gagarin** was a Soviet pilot and cosmonaut. He was the first human to journey into outer space

when his Vostok spacecraft completed an orbit of Earth on April 12, 1961.



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