China had become the first nation ever to successfully land a spacecraft on the far side of the moon. The official China Central Television station announced that the lunar explorer spaceship, Chang'e 4, touched down at 10:26am on Thursday. Professor Zhu Menghua, from Macau University of Science and Technology, said the success of the mission was a major milestone for China and established the nation as a pioneer in space exploration. He told the New York Times: "We Chinese people have done something that the Americans have not dared try." Sun Zezhou, chief designer of Chang'e-4, said: "Landing on the far side of the moon is more risky than landing on the near side."

The Chang'e-4 probe started sending photographs back to Earth soon after it landed on the moon's surface. The China National Space Administration said the mission had, "lifted the mysterious veil" from the far side of the moon and "opened a new chapter in human lunar exploration". Sun Zezhou told reporters about the significance of the program. He said it would, "help lay the foundation for future space exploration." He added: "A high-precision landing is a necessity for further exploring the moon and asteroids. We hope to be able to reach the whole moon and even the whole solar system." China also has plans to launch a returnable spacecraft (Chang'e 5) by 2020.

Sources: scmp.com / xinhuanet.com / foxnews.com

Writing

Space exploration is humankind's most important pursuit. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

nation / spacecraft / official / lunar / success / mission / exploration / something / risky / photographs / mysterious / veil / space / human / precision / asteroids / solar system

True / False

a) An official China TV station announced the news of the moon landing.  T / F
b) The spacecraft landed on the moon on Thursday night.  T / F
c) A professor said China was now a pioneer in space exploration.  T / F
d) Landing on the near side of the moon is easier than the far side.  T / F
e) The spacecraft took over 24 hours to send photos back to Earth.  T / F
f) The spacecraft put a veil on the far side of the moon.  T / F
g) A designer said this program would help to explore asteroids.  T / F
h) China wants to make a returnable spacecraft by 2030.  T / F

Synonym Match
(The words in bold are from the news article.)

1. land  a. landmark 2. announced  b. hazardous 3. milestone  c. puzzling 4. pioneer  d. basis 5. risky  e. declared 6. mission  f. period 7. mysterious  g. touch down 8. chapter  h. entire 9. foundation  i. innovator 10. whole  j. expedition

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you know about the moon?
b) Why has no country landed on the far side of the moon before?
c) What do you think is on the far side of the moon?
d) How big an achievement is this?
e) Is China now leading the space race?
f) What would you do if you went to the moon?
g) Should the USA now try to go to the far side of the moon?
h) What do you think of a China flag being on the far side of the moon?
Phrase Match
1. the lunar explorer
2. the mission was a major
3. established the nation as a pioneer
4. something that the Americans have
5. Landing on the far side of the moon
6. soon after it landed
7. A high-
8. exploring the moon and
9. We hope to be able to reach
10. China also has plans to launch

Discussion – Student B
a) What do you think about what you read?
b) What do you want to know about the moon?
c) Why are we so interested in the moon?
d) Why is the far side of the moon so mysterious?
e) What do you think the future of space exploration is?
f) Why do we need to explore asteroids?
g) What are the pros and cons of creating settlements on the moon?
h) What questions would you like to ask the space program boss?

Spelling
1. fueyslusccls land a spacecraft
2. television station anceduonn that
3. the lunar pxeolrer spaceship
4. the success of the misinos
5. a major onletemsi for China
6. hcfie designer of Chang'e-4
7. it landed on the moon'suerscaf
8. lifted the ssmeltoyru veil
9. told reporters about the cngecsiafiin
10. A high-pecionsr landing is a necessity
11. exploring the moon and saeidotsr
12. culahn a returnable spacecraft

Role Play
Role A – Cities on the Moon
You think having cities on the moon is the most desirable thing about the future. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): space tourism, personal spacecraft or time travel.

Role B – Space Tourism
You think space tourism is the most desirable thing about the future. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): cities on the moon, personal spacecraft or time travel.

Role C – Personal Spacecraft
You think owning personal spacecraft is the most desirable thing about the future. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): space tourism, cities on the moon or time travel.

Role D – Time Travel
You think time travel is the most desirable thing about the future. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least desirable of these (and why): space tourism, personal spacecraft or cities on the moon.

Speaking – The Future
Rank these with your partner. Put the most desirable things about the future at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- cities on the moon
- space tourism
- minerals from Mars
- travel to Mars
- personal spacecraft
- 100% solar power
- time travel
- exploring black holes

Answers – True False
a T b F c C d T e F f F g T h F

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.