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*This is not a word for word transcript.*

- Jackie:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Jackie and today I'm joined by Kaz. Hello Kaz!
- Kaz:** Hello Jackie!
- Jackie:** Today we'll be talking about the American John Glenn.
- Kaz:** Yes, John Glenn is a former astronaut – someone who goes into space.
- Jackie:** That's right, he's a former astronaut – he used to be an astronaut and he was also the first American to orbit the Earth.
- Kaz:** To orbit the Earth – that means to go round the Earth in space.
- Jackie:** Before we continue Kaz, let's not forget this week's tricky question! Can you tell me what NASA – N-A-S-A stands for? Is it
- a) National Aeronautics and Space Administration?
  - b) North American Space Agency?
  - c) National American Space Aeronautics?
- Kaz:** Tricky one there, Jackie. The first one, I think, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, but NASA... Hang on, there is no A there. So I'm going to go for North American Space Agency. See how we get on with that.
- Jackie:** OK, we'll find out whether it was a good idea to change your answer or not at the end of the programme.
- Kaz:** So John Glenn was the first American to orbit Earth, so that must've been what – about fifty years ago?
- Jackie:** That's right – exactly 50 years ago, in fact, in February 1962, which is why NASA is honouring him. Let's listen to a report on John Glenn. As you listen, try to answer this question:
- Kaz:** How many times did John Glenn go round the Earth in 1962?
- Jackie:** Reporting from Washington, here's Steve Kingstone.

**Steve Kingstone, BBC**

*It was, of course, the Soviet Union that put the first man into orbit. But when John Glenn circled the Earth three times in five hours in February 1962, it marked America's return to the space race - paving the way for Neil Armstrong's moon landing seven years later.*

**Jackie:** The answer to the question was: he orbited the Earth three times. As we heard in the report, it was, of course the Soviet Union that put the first man into orbit.

**Kaz:** But when John Glenn circled the Earth, it marked – it showed - America's return to the space race.

**Jackie:** The space race – the big competition between the Soviet Union and the United States for supremacy in space – to dominate and take control of space.

**Kaz:** Steve Kingstone said this paved the way – it prepared the path - for Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon seven years later.

**Jackie:** So this was a very important event for the United States – not only a sign of their return to the space race, but also an event that paved the way for Neil Armstrong's landing on the moon. It was a **pioneering** voyage.

**Kaz:** A pioneering voyage – a journey that explored new areas and opened up new possibilities.

**Jackie:** The anniversary of this event was celebrated in a special way. Let's listen to the rest of Steve Kingstone's report to find out how it was celebrated.

**Steve Kingstone, BBC**

*On the fiftieth anniversary of that pioneering voyage, NASA had a surprise for Mr Glenn, now a sprightly ninety years old.*

*NASA: "We've got you loud and clear, welcome aboard the International Space Station."*

*He was greeted in a live video call by today's astronauts, orbiting the Earth. And the VIP guest was clearly impressed by the communications.*

*Glenn: "I just was sitting here thinking a minute ago about how technology has gone ahead so rapidly in the space age because here we are watching high-definition television here and you guys are coming through perfectly, so you have constant communication around here. It's just amazing that we can sit here and talk to you back and forth."*

*John Glenn joked that he'd like to return to space - something he last achieved fourteen years ago, in his late seventies. This anniversary event was in part an effort to publicise NASA's achievements at a time when its budget is under threat*

**Jackie:** The anniversary was marked by a live video call to the International Space Station with the astronauts of today.

- Kaz:** And John Glenn was very **impressed** – he thought it was great that he could talk live to the astronauts, something that technology could not achieve in 1962.
- Jackie:** So this video call was a way of honouring John Glenn and celebrating the anniversary of the orbit, but aside from this, the report touched on another reason why NASA might have chosen to mark the occasion.
- Kaz:** Yes, Steve Kingstone mentioned that the event was partly an effort to **publicise** – to make known – NASA's achievements. Why would they do that? Well because their **budget** is **under threat**: they are worried they might not get as much money as they need to do their work.
- Jackie:** Well, John Glenn seems eager to achieve more things. He joked that he'd like to return to space.
- Kaz:** He's only 90 years old after all – why not pop up to space for a quick visit if he wants to?
- Jackie:** Yes, why not! After all, the last time he went he was in his seventies – that made him the oldest man ever in space! Steve described John Glenn as '**sprightly**', which means lively and full of energy. Did you ever have dreams of being an astronaut Kaz?
- Kaz:** Funnily enough, that's exactly what I wanted to be.
- Jackie:** Really? But it never happened?
- Kaz:** It never happened. But it might, you know, I am still a spring chicken.
- Jackie:** Let's have a reminder of some of the words we've talked about:
- astronaut  
pioneering  
to go into orbit  
the space race  
to pave the way  
to publicise  
sprightly
- Jackie:** Now, the answer to the question: what does NASA, N-A-S-A stand for? You said North American Space Agency, and you shouldn't have changed your answer because you had it right the first time. It's actually the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.
- Kaz:** Ah, wrong again.
- Jackie:** Yeah, it's a bit of a mouthful anyway that one. That's all for now, but do join us again soon for more 6 Minute English! Bye!
- Kaz:** Bye bye!

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>astronauts</b>	people who go into space to explore
<b>to orbit</b>	to circle round a planet or object in space
<b>marked</b>	celebrated, honoured
<b>space race</b>	the competition between the US and the Soviet Union for supremacy in space
<b>pioneering</b>	discovering new places and things, opening up new possibilities
<b>to be impressed</b>	to think something is very good
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<b>budget</b>	sum of money allocated to be used during a certain period of time
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<b>sprightly</b>	lively and full of energy

More on John Glenn:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-17107817>

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