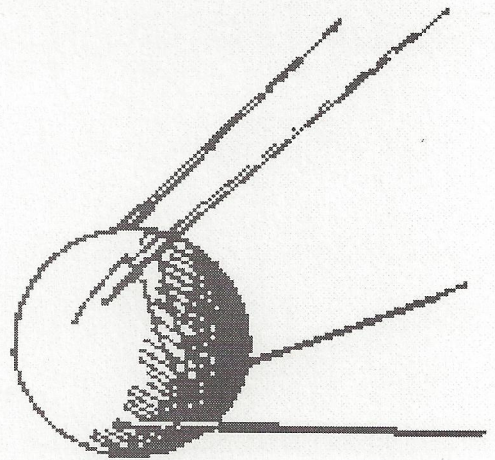



Sputnik and the Space Race

History changed on October 4, 1957, when the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik I. The world's first artificial satellite was about the size of a basketball, weighed only 183 pounds, and took about 98 minutes to orbit the Earth on its elliptical path.



While the Sputnik launch was a single event, it marked the start of the space age and the **Space Race** between the United States and the U.S.S.R. The world had entered the Space Age.

Year	Accomplishment	Country
1957	The Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first artificial Earth satellite. "Sputnik" is the Russian word for "Traveler."	USSR
1958	The Americans launch their first satellite: Explorer I. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is formed in the United States. NASA is the federal agency devoted to exploring space.	USA 
1959	Luna I becomes the first space probe to hit the Moon.	USSR

1961	Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human being to orbit the Earth.	USSR
1961 (later on . . .)	Alan Shepherd, Jr. goes to space.	USA
1963	Valentina Tereshkova becomes the first woman in space	USSR
1968	The first manned orbit of the Moon (Apollo 8)	USA
1969	The first human being touches the surface of the Moon.	USA

Both countries wanted to ensure that they had the advantage in the conquest of space – nether one wanted to be outdone.

While the USSR had the early lead, the United States would eventually become the clear leader in the exploration of space when they landed Neil Armstrong on the Moon (the Sea of Tranquillity) July 21st, 1969.

