

# A Dictionary of the Space Age



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The launch of Sputnik 1 in 1957 ushered in an exciting era of scientific and technological advancement. As television news anchors, radio hosts, and journalists reported the happenings of the American and the Soviet space programs to millions of captivated citizens, words that belonged to the worlds of science, aviation, and science fiction suddenly became part of the colloquial language. What's more, NASA used a litany of acronyms in much of its official correspondence in an effort to transmit as much information in as little time as possible. To translate this peculiar vocabulary, Paul Dickson has compiled the curious lingo and mystifying acronyms of NASA in an accessible dictionary of the names, words, and phrases of the Space Age. Aviators, fighter pilots, and test pilots coined the phrases "spam in a can" (how astronauts felt prelaunch as they sat in a tiny capsule atop a rocket booster); "tickety-boo" (things are fine), and "the Eagle has landed" (Neil Armstrong's famous quote when Apollo 11 landed on the Moon). This dictionary captures a broader foundation for language of the Space Age based on the historic principles employed by the Oxford English Dictionary and Webster's New Third International Dictionary. Word histories for major terms are detailed in a conversational tone, and technical terms are deciphered for the interested student and lay reader. This is a must-own reference for space history buffs.

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