Comprehension Passage

Sunita Williams – A Journey Beyond Earth

Sunita Williams, a name synonymous with courage, determination, and exploration, is one of the most celebrated astronauts in the world. Born on **September 19, 1965**, in **Euclid, Ohio**, Sunita grew up in a family that valued education and hard work. Her father, Dr. Deepak Pandya, was a renowned neuroanatomist, and her mother, Bonnie Pandya, was a homemaker. From a young age, Sunita was fascinated by the stars and the mysteries of the universe, often spending nights gazing at the sky and dreaming of space travel. Sunita pursued **her passion for science and engineering** by earning a **Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Science from the United States Naval Academy in 1987**. She later obtained a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from the Florida Institute of Technology in 1995. Her academic background laid a strong foundation for her future career in space exploration.

Before becoming an astronaut, Sunita served as a **helicopter pilot in the U.S. Navy, logging over 3,000 flight hours** in more than 30 different aircraft. Her exceptional skills and dedication earned her a place in NASA's astronaut corps in 1998. Since then, she has been a trailblazer in space exploration, breaking records and inspiring millions.

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Sunita Williams' Latest Mission

Sunita Williams embarked on her latest space mission on **June 6, 2024, aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft as part of NASA's Crewed Flight Test.** Originally planned as an eight-day mission, the journey faced unexpected technical issues, including thruster malfunctions and helium leaks, which resulted in an extended stay aboard the International Space Station (ISS). During this mission, she served as a flight engineer for Expedition 71/72, contributing to scientific research, maintenance, and space station operations. **On January 30, 2025, she conducted a 5.5-hour spacewalk,** setting a new record for the longest cumulative spacewalking time by a female astronaut.

Life in Space

Living in space for over **nine months** presents numerous challenges, but Sunita adapted by following a strict exercise regimen to prevent muscle atrophy and bone density loss. She relied on specially designed space food and maintained a disciplined routine to stay physically and mentally fit. Her resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving skills have made her a role model for aspiring astronauts worldwide.

Return to Earth

As of now, Sunita Williams is scheduled to return to **Earth on March 18, 2025, aboard SpaceX's Crew Dragon spacecraft.** Her return will mark the end of another remarkable mission, but her contributions to space exploration will continue to inspire future generations.

A Legacy Beyond the Stars

Sunita Williams' journey—from a starry-eyed child to a record-breaking astronaut—is a testament to the power of dreams and perseverance. Her story reminds us that the sky is not the limit—it's just the beginning.

Comprehension Passage

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1. What degrees did Sunita Williams earn, and from which institutions?

2. Why was Sunita Williams' latest space mission extended beyond its original duration?

3. How did Sunita Williams maintain her physical and mental health while living in space for over nine months?

4. What qualities do you think helped Sunita Williams successfully overcome challenges during her extended mission?

5. How do you think Sunita Williams' record-breaking spacewalk contributes to the future of space exploration?