

FIRST CONTACT

SCENE IS THE BRIDGE OF A FUTURISTIC RAF SPACESHIP. THEY ARE ABOUT TO LAND PEOPLE ON MARS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

REPORTER: Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I'm Dave Higgins from the BBC Space Service. You join us on a momentous date in human history. Yes, today, the 14th of May in the year two thousand and fifty, will go down as the first time any living human has set foot on the planet Mars! I'm here in the Royal Air and Space Force interplanetary ship *First Contact* and we are only a few minutes from landing on the surface of Mars. Let's have a word with some of the crew— they're all pretty excited, I can tell you. And who are you?

PILOT: Hello—I'm the pilot. I'm in charge of this amazing spaceship.

REPORTER: And you?

NAVIGATOR: I'm the navigator. I make sure we get to where we're supposed to be going.

REPORTER: And how about you?

ENGINEER: I'm the engineer. I make sure our very important jet engines are working properly. But we've had no trouble on this trip. We only use the best engines in the Royal Air and Space Force.

REPORTER: I can vouch for that, folks. It's been plain sailing all the way from planet Earth. It's taken nearly two years to get here but it's all been worth it. Tell me—are you excited about landing on Mars?

GEOLOGIST: Oh very excited! I can't wait to get my hands on some Martian dirt. I'm a geologist, you see. I study the rocks and stones.

REPORTER: And how about you? Looking forward to being one of the first humans ever to set foot on an alien planet?

METEOROLOGIST: Oh I'm super excited! I'm a meteorologist, you see.

REPORTER: Meteorol.... that's a fancy word. You study meteors then?

METEOROLOGIST: No, no— a meteorologist studies the weather and the atmosphere. Do you know, in a few years' time we might be able to create a perfect atmosphere here on Mars. Then thousands of people could come and live here, without spacesuits.

REPORTER: Fascinating.

PILOT: Okay folks— strap yourselves in: we're about to make our final approach to Mars.

WE HEAR A LOT OF RATTLING AND BANGING AS THE CREW ARE THROWN ABOUT A BIT BY THE BUMPY RIDE.

REPORTER: And as we descend through the thin Martian atmosphere, it's hard to make out any detail.

GEOLOGIST: Oh but it's beautiful—it's all red!

NAVIGATOR: Wait a minute—what on Earth is that?

PILOT: We're not *on* earth any more, this is Mars, remember?

GEOLOGIST: I can see it too! It's enormous!

ENGINEER: I think it's moving too.

NAVIGATOR: Do you think it's dangerous, sir?

REPORTER: It looks dangerous.

PILOT: I don't know. But one thing is for sure. We're definitely not alone...

NOTES

Continue the scene so that we find out what happens to the crew and their spaceship. Try to extend the scene by at least another two pages.

The scene could be played like a radio play, where we only hear the voices of the crew. However, with the imaginative use of every-day items like chairs etc, you could also show the action as it takes place. Can you create the spaceship interior from objects/furniture that you find around you?

How do you think sound might play a part in enhancing the drama of the scene? How would the ship sound before they enter the Martian atmosphere? What would the rattling and banging of the spaceship entering the atmosphere be like? How could you recreate these sounds and incorporate them into the play? How would the crew react to these sounds?

What have the crew seen on the surface of Mars? The script gives very little detail apart from it being enormous and possibly moving. Could this mean that whatever it is, is alive? How would the crew react to this incredible sight? Create a definite, dramatic ending to the play. What happens to the ship and its crew? Is whatever's down there friendly or dangerous?