

The Fever of '57

EXPLORATION 3: Was it right to send Laika the dog on a one-way trip into space?

Disciplines: Social Studies, History, Science, Language Arts

Suggested Age: This exploration is appropriate for Grades 8 through College level, with varying levels of sophistication.

Background: November 3, 1957, the U.S.S.R. stunned the world when they sent a dog into space. Dog lovers were horrified when they realized the innocent canine known as Laika was not coming home. The Soviets had no intention of bringing her home, they were in a hurry to prove they could send a dog into space, and they didn't have time to figure out how to bring her home. Laika's death was splashed on the front page of newspapers the world over. The little dog's lonely death struck a responsive chord with millions.

Exploration 3 Activity Ideas for Students:

Activity 1:

Conduct research and then have a classroom debate about Laika the space dog. Allow students to divide into two groups:

- 1.) Animals should be used in science and testing
- 2.) Animals should not be used, or minimally used in science and testing.

Start the debate with the following prompt questions.

- Should Laika have been sent into space even when the Soviet's knew there was no way to bring her home alive?
- Is it right for mankind to use animals for our own scientific advancement?
- Is it ever justified to use animals in science?
- Has our society evolved in 50 years in the treatment and acceptable use of test animals?
- In the past people have been used in experimental situations by science and the military in the United States (ex. atomic tests); in some cases the individuals involved had no knowledge of the medical risks associated with their participation. Under what conditions is human participation in scientific or military experimentation acceptable?
- What animals were used in space programs, and what was their fate? How did they help us?

Activity 2:

Write poetry or essays on your personal feelings about Laika, the space dog.

Related Media:

- Part 2 – The Fever of '57 (DVD)

Student Handouts and Helpers:

- Exploration 3 Student Activity
- Online Homework Helper for Exploration 3 at www.theefeverof57.com

Related National Council of Social Studies Standards:

1. **Standard II** Time, Continuity, and Change (Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.
2. **Standard XIII** Science, Technology and Society (social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.

Online Homework Helper for Exploration 3

The links below are available and hot-linked for students from the website www.thefeverof57.com under “Homework Helper”.

Animals in Space

<http://www.spacetoday.org/Astronauts/Animals/Dogs.html>

How Leika Died

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/2367681.stm>

Changing Landscape for Test Animals

http://www.aspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_iam_statement

Exploration 3

Student Activity Sheet

The Fever of '57

Your Exploration

Was it right to send Laika the dog on a one way trip into space?

Background: Dog lovers were horrified when they realized the innocent canine known as Laika was not coming home. Those who strapped her in Sputnik 2 had no intention of bringing her home. They knew the technology didn't exist yet for a safe return trip -- and they sent her anyhow. Later, the Soviet's built monuments honoring the little dog who had allowed them to make a great scientific breakthrough.

Here's What to Do

Activity 1:

Conduct research and then debate about Laika the space dog. Your two groups can split along these lines:

- 1.) Animals should be used in science and testing
- 2.) Animals should not be used, or minimally used in science and testing.

Here are some questions to get you started.

- Should Leika have been sent into space even when the Soviet's knew there was no way to bring her home alive?
- Is it right for mankind to use animals for our own scientific advancement?
- Is it ever justified to use animals in science?
- Has our society evolved in 50 years in the treatment and acceptable use of test animals?
- Have people ever been used by science or the military without their knowledge or consent, and is that acceptable?
- What animals were used in space programs, and what was their fate? How did they help us?

Activity 2:

Write poetry or essays on your personal feelings about Leika, the space dog.

Visit **The Fever of '57 Homework Helper** for videos and links to help you with Exploration 3.

www.thefeverof57.com

