


## 9a An ordinary man

### Listening and reading

- 1  2.14 Work in pairs. Look at the photo and discuss who this person is and what the occasion of the photo was. Then listen to a conversation about it and check.
- 2 Read the article and say in what ways Armstrong was an ordinary man and in what ways he was extraordinary.

- 3 Read the article again. Answer the questions.

- 1 Why is Armstrong called 'the ultimate professional'?
- 2 Who paid for his university course and what did they get in return?
- 3 What motivated Armstrong?
- 4 What do you think is meant by the phrase 'the rest is history'?
- 5 What did Armstrong do to avoid publicity after the Apollo 11 mission?
- 6 According to Armstrong, who was responsible for the success of the Apollo 11 mission?

**N**eil Armstrong, the most famous of the astronauts on Apollo 11, has been called the ultimate professional. He was hired to do a job. He did the job and then he went home and kept quiet about it. In 40 years, he gave two interviews. But how can the man who first set foot on the Moon, a hero to millions of people, remain such a mystery?

People like Armstrong often develop their interests at a young age. He followed a career built on a passion for flying that he developed in his childhood in the 1930s. He learnt to fly before he had graduated from high school in Wapakoneta, Ohio. He then did a course in aerospace engineering at Purdue University in Indiana, sponsored by the United States Navy, which meant that Armstrong was obliged to serve as a naval pilot for three years. He saw action almost immediately, flying 78 missions in the war in Korea.

He left the Navy in 1952 and two years later got a job with the Lewis Flight Propulsion Laboratory where he flew experimental aircraft. He reached speeds of 6,615 kilometres an hour and altitudes of over 200,000 feet. When he decided to become an astronaut is not clear. Certainly, it was not his ambition to be famous. An extremely talented pilot, his aim was simply to push the boundaries of flight.

He was selected for a space plane pilot training programme in 1960 but shortly after news began to circulate that NASA was looking for astronauts for their Apollo programme. Incredibly excited, he applied for the job and in 1962 was accepted. The rest, as they say, is history.

When the astronauts returned from the Apollo 11 Moon landing of July 1969, Armstrong was a worldwide celebrity and could have done anything he wanted – TV shows, public speaking. Instead, he became a teacher at the University of Cincinnati and at the weekend went flying to get away from all the attention. He subsequently worked for two private avionics firms until he retired in 2002. In 40 years he only gave two interviews. Why? Certainly he felt fortunate to have had the chance to fulfil his dream, but he did not feel any more special than the thousands of people who worked on the Apollo space programme. He was just the pilot.

## — An ORDINARY man —





## Vocabulary careers

- 4 Work in pairs. Find verbs in the article that collocate with each of these nouns. Then identify the different steps in Armstrong's career.

- 1 to \_\_\_\_\_ a career
- 2 to \_\_\_\_\_ a school or college
- 3 to \_\_\_\_\_ a course
- 4 to \_\_\_\_\_ in the navy
- 5 to \_\_\_\_\_ an astronaut
- 6 to \_\_\_\_\_ a firm
- 7 to \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ a job

### ► WORDBUILDING verb (+ preposition) + noun collocations

follow a career

graduate from a school/college

For further information and practice, see Workbook page 119.

## Grammar articles: *the* or zero article?

- 5 Look at how *the* or zero article are used in the first paragraph of the article. Match the words in bold (1–7) with the uses of *the* and the zero article (a–g).

Neil Armstrong, (1) **the most famous** of (2) **the astronauts** on Apollo 11, has been called the ultimate professional. He was hired to do a job. He did (3) **the job** and then he went (4) **home** and kept quiet about it. In 40 years he gave two interviews. But how can (5) **the man** who first set foot on (6) **the Moon**, a hero to (7) **millions** of people, remain such a mystery?

- a to talk about an already mentioned thing
- b to talk about something unique
- c before a superlative adjective
- d to talk about a specific thing or person
- e to talk about specific things or people
- f to talk about things or people in general
- g before certain familiar places (e.g. work, hospital, university, school)

- 6 Work in pairs. Find one more example of each use in the rest of the article.

### ► ARTICLES: *THE* or *ZERO* ARTICLE?

#### definite article

*the* + singular/plural countable nouns, uncountable nouns = specific things

#### zero article

– + plural countable nouns, uncountable nouns = things in general

NB We don't use *the* with most time expressions or place names. However, there are some special cases.

For further information and practice, see page 86.


- 7 Find an example in the article of the following:

- 1 zero article with:
  - a) a country
  - b) a subject of study
  - c) a month
- 2 *the* with:
  - a) a country
  - b) a professional group
  - c) a period of time

- 8 Complete these sentences by inserting *the* where necessary.

- 1 While flying for \_\_\_\_\_ Navy in \_\_\_\_\_ Korea, Armstrong had to eject into \_\_\_\_\_ sea when one of \_\_\_\_\_ wings on his plane was damaged.
- 2 Armstrong and Aldrin only spent one day on \_\_\_\_\_ surface of \_\_\_\_\_ Moon.
- 3 Armstrong retired from \_\_\_\_\_ NASA in \_\_\_\_\_ 1972, but he helped with \_\_\_\_\_ crash investigations in \_\_\_\_\_ later years.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ first investigation was in \_\_\_\_\_ May 1970 following an explosion on \_\_\_\_\_ Apollo 13.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ other investigation involved \_\_\_\_\_ space shuttle Challenger, which broke into \_\_\_\_\_ pieces over \_\_\_\_\_ Atlantic Ocean near \_\_\_\_\_ Florida.
- 6 In \_\_\_\_\_ nineties Armstrong stopped signing \_\_\_\_\_ autographs, because \_\_\_\_\_ dealers were selling them for \$1,000 a time.

## 9 Pronunciation linking vowels

- a  2.15 Words that end with a vowel and words that begin with a vowel are linked by a 'hidden' consonant: /w/, /j/, or /r/. Listen to these phrases and say which sound links the two words. Then practise saying the sentences with your partner.

- 1 the\_ultimate professional
- 2 to do\_a job
- 3 a disaster\_involving
- 4 a teacher\_at the university
- 5 he\_only gave two\_interviews
- 6 another hero\_of our time

- b Make three more phrases with either the /w/, /j/ or /r/ linking sound. Then compare your phrases with another pair.

## Speaking

- 10 Draw a path of your own (or a parent's) career. Begin with your interests as a child. Finish with future ambitions. If it is not an obvious linear progression, show how the direction changed. Then explain the path to your partner.