

Apollo 13
(Drama/Adventure) (1995)

Major Characters

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| Jim Lovell | Tom Hanks |
| The greatly respected commander of Apollo 13. | |
| Fred Haise | Bill Paxton |
| The second astronaut that was planning to walk on the moon with Jim. | |
| Jack Swigert | Kevin Bacon |
| The pilot of the command module that was going to circle the moon while Jim and Fred walked on the lunar surface. | |
| Ken Mattingly | Gary Sinise |
| The original pilot of the command module, who was replaced by Jack at the last moment, because of health concerns by NASA doctors. | |
| Gene Kranz | Ed Harris |
| The head of Mission Control in Houston, Texas, which is responsible for guiding all of the missions into outer space. | |
| Marilyn Lovell | Kathleen Quinlan |
| Jim's wife, and the mother of his three kids. | |

Plot Summary

This film is the true story of Apollo 13, the third American space mission to the moon. It took place in the Spring of 1970, just one year after Neil Armstrong became the first man to ever walk on the lunar surface, in July 1969. A couple days after the rocket took off, an explosion dramatically changed the nature of the mission, and what was to become the third trip to the moon was suddenly changed into a desperate attempt to get the astronauts back home to earth.

It is easy to forget just how difficult this was, for much of the spaceship had been heavily damaged by the explosion. Over the course of four extremely tense days, specialists in Houston and the astronauts themselves faced a variety of deadly challenges, from the spaceship's shortage of electrical power and breathable air to the risk of literally getting lost in space. Ultimately, this is one of the truly amazing tales of human skill and courage.

Some basic NASA-related vocabulary frequently used in this film:

NASA: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which is the government agency responsible for all space exploration.

Mission Control: The highly computerized control center in Houston, Texas, that guides all space missions. Often referred to as simply "Houston."

We got some blood work back from the lab. Charles Duke has the measles.
"Blood work" refers to tests that are done on a person's blood to test for various conditions or diseases. The "measles" is a childhood disease.

You've all been exposed to it.

If you have been "exposed to" a disease, this means that it is possible you may catch it because you were around a person who has it.

I've had the measles. Ken Mattingly hasn't.

Note that Jim mentions that he has already had the measles, because if you've had it as a child, you can no longer get it as an adult.

Jack Swigert has been out of the loop for weeks!

To be "out of the loop" means to be uninformed, or not know what is happening with a particular plan or project.

Roger, 13. Ok, we're at 3 Gs. 5 Gs.

Astronauts, police and others will use the "roger" to mean "I heard and understood."

A "G" is a unit of force caused by gravity.

It looks like we just had our glitch for the mission.

A small problem that can usually be easily fixed.

Frank Borman was upchucking most of the way to the moon on Apollo 8.

"To upchuck" is a slangy way to say vomit or throw up.

She's still going on about the stupid Beatles breaking up.

To "go on" about something is to continue to talk about it, usually in an emotional manner (The Beatles broke up in 1970).

If anyone from the IRS is watching, I forgot to file my 1040 return.

The IRS is the Internal Revenue Service, which is the government agency which collects taxes. "To file" a paper is to officially fill it out and give it to an office to be recorded. A "1040 return" is the most well-known type of tax form, which most Americans file by every April 15.

Houston, we have a problem. We have a lot of thrust activity.

The first sentence here is the most famous line in the movie. "Thrust activity" refers to the thruster engines, which are used to push the rocket ship forward with great amounts of energy, or "thrust."

The lunar module just became a lifeboat.

A small boat that is found on large ships that is supposed to save passengers if the ship begins to sink.

Aquarius, this is Houston, we got you back on Vox.

The acoustic system that allows everyone at Mission Control to hear what the astronauts are saying.

You have a hot mike; We are reading everything you say.

A "hot mike" is a slangy way of saying that the microphone is always on. In this case, "to read" a person is to hear them (but this would only be used in an official military or aviation context).

I agree; We use the moon's gravity to slingshot them around.

"Gravity" is the natural force that pulls things to big objects like planets and moons.

"To slingshot" an object is to quickly shoot it through space (A slingshot is a Y-shaped fork with a rubber band for shooting).

I'm not going to sugarcoat this for you!

"To sugarcoat" something is to try and make it sound less bad or dangerous than it really is.

So long earth; Catch you on the flip side.

"So long" is a common way of saying goodbye. The second sentence is a slangy way of saying "See you later."

With everything on, the LEM draws 60 amps.

Note that machines "draw amps," which is one way of saying to use electricity. An amp is a standard unit of electrical power.

If we see it spike, that's sayonara for the guidance computer.

"To spike" is to suddenly go up very high, but only for a brief time. "Sayonara" is the Japanese word for goodbye, though Americans will use it to mean the end, or death.

We don't want you to make any more waste dumps. The venting may push you off course.

In this case, a "waste dump" is the expelling of human waste (shit) from the spaceship. If it's "off course," it's not going the right direction.

That's it. We just put Sir Isaac Newton in the driver's seat.

Once they turned off the engines, the gravity of the moon and the earth were controlling the ship (Newton discovered the force of gravity).

Gene, we have a situation developing with the carbon dioxide.

A poisonous gas that is created from people breathing in a closed space when there is not enough air circulation.

Anything over 15 and you get impaired judgment, blackouts, the beginnings of brain asphyxia.

"Impaired judgment" is the reduced ability to think clearly. A "blackout" is the sudden but short loss of consciousness. "Asphyxia" is serious injury or death caused by lack of oxygen.

Those Co2 levels are going to be getting toxic.

"C-o-2" is a short way of referring to carbon dioxide. If something is "toxic," it is dangerous or poisonous.

It hurts when I urinate.

"To urinate" is the official verb meaning to go to the bathroom, or more colloquially, to piss or take a leak.

I think old Swigert gave me the clap.

A colloquial expression for gonorrhea, a well known sexually transmitted disease.

He's been pissing in my relief tube.

"To piss" is to urinate. A "relief tube" is the plastic tube that the astronauts use to urinate.

This piece of shit is going to get you home.

A vulgar but common way of referring to anything that is bad or in poor quality. In this case, a reference to the lunar module.

What was that gauge reading before you hit the switch?

To "hit a switch" is to turn it on or off.

They asked me to stir the tanks and I stirred the tanks!

In this case, "to stir" the tanks is to shake the gas inside them.

Stop kicking yourself in the ass.

"Stop feeling guilty about what you did."

We are not going to go bouncing off the walls for 10 minutes, because we'll end up right here with the same problems.

"To bounce off the walls" is Jim's way of saying to scream and argue with each other ("To bounce off" something is to hit it and then spring back from the act of hitting it).

Maybe I should just hold my breath.

If a person holds their breath, they try to stop breathing.

Heads up people, look out now.

A way of telling people to stop being so depressed.

Lithium hydroxide canisters. Duct tape.

A type of container, in this case for a type of gas. "Duct tape" is a type of very strong and thick tape that is usually silver color.

The scrubbers intended to keep the lunar air breathable....are quickly becoming saturated.

If an object is "saturated," it is completely filled up or soaked. In this case, the filter are scrubbers are filled with toxic gas.

Do you need a break, Ken?

A common and useful way to say a short rest.

I am sick and tired of the entire Western World knowing how my kidneys are functioning.

To be “sick and tired” of something is a common way of saying you no longer want to be involved with it, or more colloquially, that you’re fed up with it.

We just had a drop out of your biomed sensors.

In this case, a “drop out” is a sudden disappearance. “Biomed sensors” are devices that send back information to a computer on bodily functions such as heart rate and blood pressure.

It’s just a little medical mutiny. I’m sure the guys are still with us.

A “mutiny” is a sudden revolt against the captain of a ship.

Let’s cut them some slack, OK?

“To cut somebody some slack” is to treat them with patience and tolerance, even if they have violated certain rules (“Slack” is the extra rope that is not needed when two things are tied together).

It’s not the velocity; It’s the angle.

“Velocity” is speed while “angle” is the direction from which an object is coming.

At this rate, they nick the earth’s atmosphere and bounce off into space.

“To nick” a surface is to lightly cut into it (Men do this shaving).

Fire the engines and get them on course.

“To fire” the engines is a mechanic’s way of saying to get them started. If they are “on course,” they’re following the right path or doing what they’re supposed to do.

Negative on that; We can’t spare power for the computer.

“Negative” is a NASA/military way of saying no. If you can’t “spare” something, you can’t afford to give it up because it’s so rare or precious.

Without the computer, what do we use for orientation?

A key word meaning sense of direction.

We’re trying to hash something out down here. Standby.

“To hash out” something means to try and put it together.

All we need is one fixed point in space.

For a pilot or astronaut, a “fixed point” is a non-moving point of reference, that will allow them to keep a sense of direction.

In order to enter the atmosphere safely, the crew must aim for a corridor just two and half degrees wide.

“To aim” for something is to point or steer toward it. Here, a “corridor” is a narrow pathway to travel in.

If they’re too sharp, they’ll incinerate in the steadily thickening air....

A “sharp” angle is wide, and might be 45 degrees or more. “To incinerate” is to burn up in a hot fire.

We are looking at a typhoon warning on the edge of the prime recovery zone.

A “typhoon” is a very violent storm. In this case, “the prime recovery zone” is where the command module is expected to land in the ocean.

57 segments 2 hrs 13 min

Military Time
Heat Shield
Acquisition
Ballast

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|----|-------|---------|--|
| 1 | 00:00 | 00:00 | Credits, Apollo 11 on the moon, party by the three whose time is coming |
| 2 | 05:28 | 05:28 | Drunk in the back yard |
| 3 | 07:50 | 07:50 | 5 months later (December 1969), the tour |
| 4 | 09:40 | 09:40 | They get Apollo 13 (explain the superstition) |
| 5 | 11:13 | 11:13 | Practice, run it again |
| 6 | 13:17 | 13:17 | Disaster dream, Did you know the astronauts in the fire , still doing public appearances, Lucky 13, Lovell's wife won't be at the launch |
| 7 | 18:30 | 18:30 | Press conference |
| 8 | 19:50 | 19:50 | Will they break up the crew because of measles? Swigert in! |
| 9 | 24:02 | 24:02 | New crew's simulation is a problem |
| 10 | 26:18 | 26:18 | Lovell's wife arrives |
| 11 | 27:49 | 27:49 | Med crew, she loses her ring, prelaunch |
| 12 | 32:26 | 32:26 | More prelaunch |
| 13 | 34:20 | 34:20 | T minus 14... liftoff, jolt at earth gravity (they lose 1 of the 5 engines), do we abort? No just don't lose another engine, de-suit |
| 14 | 39:08 | 39:08 | Press and wives |
| 15 | 39:50 | 39:50 | Barf in space, Swigert separates and lines up |
| 16 | 43:23 | 43:23 | |
| 17 | 44:12 | 44:12 | Day 3, 4/13, toilet, Beatles break up |
| 18 | 45:12 | 45:12 | Broadcast (TV showing baseball), The song is called "Spirit in the Sky" , old folks home, forgot to file his taxes |
| 19 | 49:37 | 49:37 | Stir oxygen - boom, losing oxygen |
| 20 | 54:06 | 54:06 | Reconstruction in Houston |
| 21 | 55:31 | 55:31 | The ship bleeding to death, give up the landing and get 'em back |
| 22 | 58:00 | 58:00 | If this doesn't work we're not gonna have power to go home, it fails, moving to the LEM |
| 23 | 59:33 | 59:33 | Less than 15 minutes to move, moving the data or they're blind, slide rules (no calculators back then) |
| 24 | 61:57 | 1:01:57 | Dick Cavett Show, ABC cuts in with special report |
| 25 | 63:36 | 1:03:36 | Did they miss a step? |
| 26 | 64:40 | 1:04:40 | More TV hyperbole, telling the boy |
| 27 | 65:47 | 1:05:47 | Shut down and hope |
| 28 | 67:20 | 1:07:20 | Improvising a new mission on chalkboard |
| 29 | 69:20 | 1:09:20 | Scheduling sleep (or trying to), Nixon wants odds |
| 30 | 70:00 | 1:10:00 | They can see the moon, around the dark side |
| 31 | 72:15 | 1:12:15 | They can see the landing site, moonwalk fantasy |
| 32 | 75:10 | 1:15:10 | Only 45 hours, turn it all off, failure is not an option |
| 33 | 77:77 | 1:17:77 | Canned astronaut into the simulator (no measles) |
| 34 | 78:49 | 1:18:49 | In the LEM, no waste dumps |
| 35 | 79:35 | 1:19:35 | Mission control, no sleep, getting sick, medical team |
| 36 | 81:00 | 1:21:00 | TV wants to transmit from Lovell's lawn |
| 37 | 82:16 | 1:22:16 | Cold in the LEM |
| 38 | 85:02 | 1:25:02 | Swigert doubts Houston's math |
| 39 | 87:10 | 1:27:10 | CO2 gauge, Houston's solution with duct tape, ripped bag, Wally Shirra , press conferences, the rigged filter works, simulator overloaded |
| 40 | 93:35 | 1:33:35 | Lovell's mom again |

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| 41 | 95:00 | 1:35:00 | Medical mutiny |
| 42 | 97:28 | 1:37:28 | Are they still venting? Frozen food, another course correction (blind) |
| 43 | 99:02 | 1:39:02 | Manual and CYA |
| 44 | 103:40 | 1:43:40 | Plan reentry |
| 45 | 105:00 | 1:45:00 | More press, old Lovell hero footage, get us the landing procedure! |
| 46 | 108:14 | 1:48:14 | 4 amps over, we got it! |
| 47 | 110:40 | 1:50:40 | The procedure |
| 48 | 114:29 | 1:54:29 | Press in Lovell's yard military school? computer works, typhoon warning |
| 49 | 116:30 | 1:56:30 | Jettison |
| 50 | 117:40 | 1:57:40 | Media |
| 51 | 118:44 | 1:58:44 | Back in LEM, Fred is soooo sick body heat in the Odyssey |
| 52 | 122:12 | 2:02:12 | Reentry setup |
| 53 | 125:12 | 2:05:12 | Reentry |
| 54 | 126:15 | 2:06:15 | Copters over the sea, blackout too long? |
| 55 | 129:00 | 2:09:00 | YES! |
| 56 | 131:50 | 2:11:50 | Hero's welcome |
| 57 | 1:33:53 | 2:13:53 | The end (credits) |

Possible Topics for Class Discussion

1. Why did we go to the moon? Why did we stop? Should we go back? What should be the goals of space programs in the future?
2. What did the Apollo space missions reflect about US culture and society?
3. Had you been the right age in the 1960s, would you have wanted to be an astronaut?
4. For you, what were the scariest problems that the astronauts faced?
5. Do you agree that Apollo 13 was a "successful failure?"
6. Did this movie have many heroes? Who were they?
7. What did you like and not like about this film?