

Keeley Library Student Pages: Sample Research Paper

Student writer Matt Korman researched the Mir space station by reading articles that he found in magazines and on the Internet. Then he wrote his research paper. Taken from Write Source 2000, <http://thewritesource.com>.

Korman 1

The writer provides a complete heading.

Matt Korman

Mr. Benjamin

Science 8

September 22, 1998

Mir Flies on for the Next Generation

BEGINNING

He introduces his topic and states his thesis (highlighted in italics).

Captain Kirk of the USS Enterprise beams you aboard. As your molecules come back together, he gives you a tour of the spotless flight deck. It's filled with clean crew members working on equipment that's all in perfect shape. That's TV. The Russian Mir space station is reality, and life there isn't glamorous. Mir astronauts are more like the early pioneers who risked their lives but kept going and made their mission a success.

Mir's struggles begin with the space station itself. Mir is an 11-year-old laboratory that made its 69,560th orbit of the earth on May 1, 1998. That's 1.83 billion miles! In

MIDDLE

The writer
cites details
that show
Conditions
on Mir.

addition to having high mileage, Mir has a computer system
that is ancient. Since Mir blasted off in 1986, astronauts have
had to fix 1,500 problems on the ship. Most were small, but
few were big. In February 1997, a fire shut down an oxygen
generator. Then in June 1997, a spaceship carrying supplies
to Mir crashed into a solar panel (Chien 97). Many times, the
crew sits in the dark because there isn't enough power to work
the computers or do experiments.

Korman 2

The writer
repeats his
analogy to
pioneers.

Like the pioneers who headed west in covered wagons, Mir
astronauts have learned to do the best they can with what they
have. For example, Mir astronauts wear their cotton T-shirts,
gym shorts, and socks for two weeks! The astronauts wear the
clothes day and night and even exercise in them. After two
weeks, astronauts just pitch the stinky stuff into space where it
burns up in the earth's atmosphere (Hoversten).

He
documents
details
gleaned from
research, but
not quoted
directly.

Life on Mir isn't glamorous. In fact, it's not even healthy.
The humid air makes molds grow, and the molds spoil the food.
The crew can't wash well, and infections spread quickly,
especially when new astronauts come onboard. After their
bodies are weightless for a long time, the bones in their lower
hips and spines get weaker (Chien 99). Then, when astronauts

go back to Earth, they have more problems. They have poor balance, weak muscles, and severe soreness (Covault 76).

The living conditions on Mir would make even Captain Kirk return to Earth. Fans hum nonstop. The smell of gasoline hangs in the air, and food is served up freeze-dried. Right now, the shower is broken, so the crew have to take sponge baths. Even sleeping is hard. Jerry Linenger is an astronaut who spent 132 days on Mir with these problems. He said, "There's something about it [life on Mir] that makes you feel, 'Yeah, I'm on the frontier' " (Hoversten).

ENDING

He restates his thesis and ends with a thoughtful sentence.

Even though life on Mir isn't glamorous, and equipment often fails, the Mir astronauts have had lots of success. Like the pioneers, the astronauts have found many useful things that help explorers who follow them. But maybe Mir's greatest success is that astronauts from Russia and the U.S., two old enemies, have worked together as friends (Chien 99)

Korman 3

Center "Works Cited" (or "Bibliography") one inch from the top

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