NAME _____

DATE _____

CLASS _____

SPACE TECH SERIES

Mae C. Jemison

Engineer, Doctor, and Astronaut

Mae Jemison Reaches for the Stars

Mae Jemison grew up in Chicago and loved science from the time she was a little girl. She read books about space and dreamed of traveling among the stars. When she was only 16 years old, she started college at Stanford University. There she studied chemical engineering and became an **engineer**.

Mae did not stop there. She went on to medical school and became a doctor. She even worked as a doctor in West Africa to help people who were sick. But she never forgot her dream of space.

In 1987, NASA chose Mae to become an astronaut. On September 12, 1992, she flew into space on the Space Shuttle Endeavour. This made her the first Black woman ever to travel in space. While she **orbited** Earth, she floated because she did not feel **gravity** pulling her down. She ran science experiments to learn how bones and living cells change in space.

SPACE WORDS TO KNOW

- **engineer:** a person who uses science and math to design and build things
- **orbit:** to travel around and around a planet, like the Moon does
- **gravity:** the pull that keeps things on the ground and holds us to Earth

Part 1 · Reading Comprehension

1. What did Mae study in college at Stanford University?

_____

_____

2. Mae was an engineer. What other job did she have?

_____

_____

3. What special first did Mae achieve in 1992?

4. What did Mae do while she was in space?

Counting Orbits

One trip all the way around Earth is called one orbit. The Space Shuttle Endeavour made about 16 orbits each day. Mae's mission lasted about 8 days in space.

1. About how many orbits did Endeavour make in 2 days? (16 x 2)
2. About how many orbits did it make in all 8 days? (16 x 8)
3. The real mission made 126 orbits. How many more orbits is your Step 2 answer than the real number? (128 - 126)

Part 3 · Think About It

Mae trained as both an engineer and a doctor before going to space. Why might NASA want an astronaut who knows about both machines and the human body?