

MISSION CONTROL KIT · EVENT BRIEF

Mission Control Kit: Crew-13

Crew-13 begins its trip to the space station · Sep 12–30, 2026 · WINDOW SET

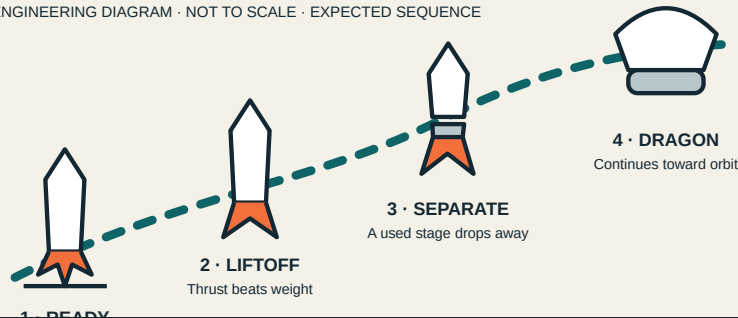
Why this moment?

Four astronauts are preparing to leave Earth, enter orbit, and catch a laboratory moving around our planet.

PREP 2 minutes	WATCH Choose a 10–15 minute launch window	MATERIALS This Kit; pencil optional	FIT Co-viewing recommended
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From pad to orbit

ENGINEERING DIAGRAM · NOT TO SCALE · EXPECTED SEQUENCE



ENGINEERING DIAGRAM · NOT TO SCALE · EXPECTED · Credit: Space Now Kids

1 · CHECK The countdown team confirms the rocket, spacecraft, weather, range, and people are ready.	2 · LIFT Falcon 9's thrust overcomes its weight and the vehicle clears the tower.	3 · SEPARATE The first stage finishes its job and separates; the second stage continues.	4 · RELEASE Dragon separates from the second stage in orbit.	5 · CATCH Dragon later approaches and docks with the space station.
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Crew-13's expected crew is Jessica Watkins, Luke Delaney, Joshua Kutryk, and Sergey Teteryatnikov, an international team of four.

Dragon is the spacecraft; Falcon 9 is the rocket that gives it the push off Earth. Dragon later changes course to meet the station.

The mission is expected to launch from Space Launch Complex 40 and travel to the International Space Station.

What counts as launch-day success?

For launch day, success is official confirmation that Dragon reached the planned orbit and is operating normally. Docking is a later milestone.

MISSION CONTROL KIT · WATCH TOGETHER

Watch together

Choose one cue and one question. You do not need to narrate everything.

Point this out

- The rocket may seem to rise slowly at first because you are seeing an enormous vehicle from far away.
- Listen for 'Max Q': the point of greatest aerodynamic pressure as the rocket climbs through the atmosphere.
- Notice when the broadcast changes from one vehicle name to another. That tells you which machine is doing the work now.

Tell them this

A spacecraft does not fly straight up to the station. It enters orbit, then changes its path over time to meet the station safely.

Afterward

Ask your child to retell the mission using five words: goal, machine, milestone, evidence, next.

Why did the countdown stop?

Why can a launch stop after the countdown begins? A target time is the best safe plan, not a promise. A hold pauses the clock; a scrub ends that attempt. Stopping when a rule is not satisfied can mean the safety system did exactly its job.

Mission words

Thrust	the push made by the engines
Stage	a rocket section that does its job, then separates
Orbit	falling around Earth fast enough to keep missing the ground

Ask, then listen

What evidence would prove Dragon, not just the rocket, is healthy?

Why is docking a different problem from launching?

Sources & credits**NASA · Crew-13 mission**

<https://www.nasa.gov/mission/nasas-spacex-crew-13/>

NASA · 2026 station flight plan

<https://www.nasa.gov/blogs/commercialcrew/2026/05/01/nasa-partners-update-international-space-station-2026-flight-plan/>

Optional countdown context photo: NASA/Ben Smegelsky · REAL IMAGE · CONTEXT PHOTO

NASA · Crew-13 briefings advisory

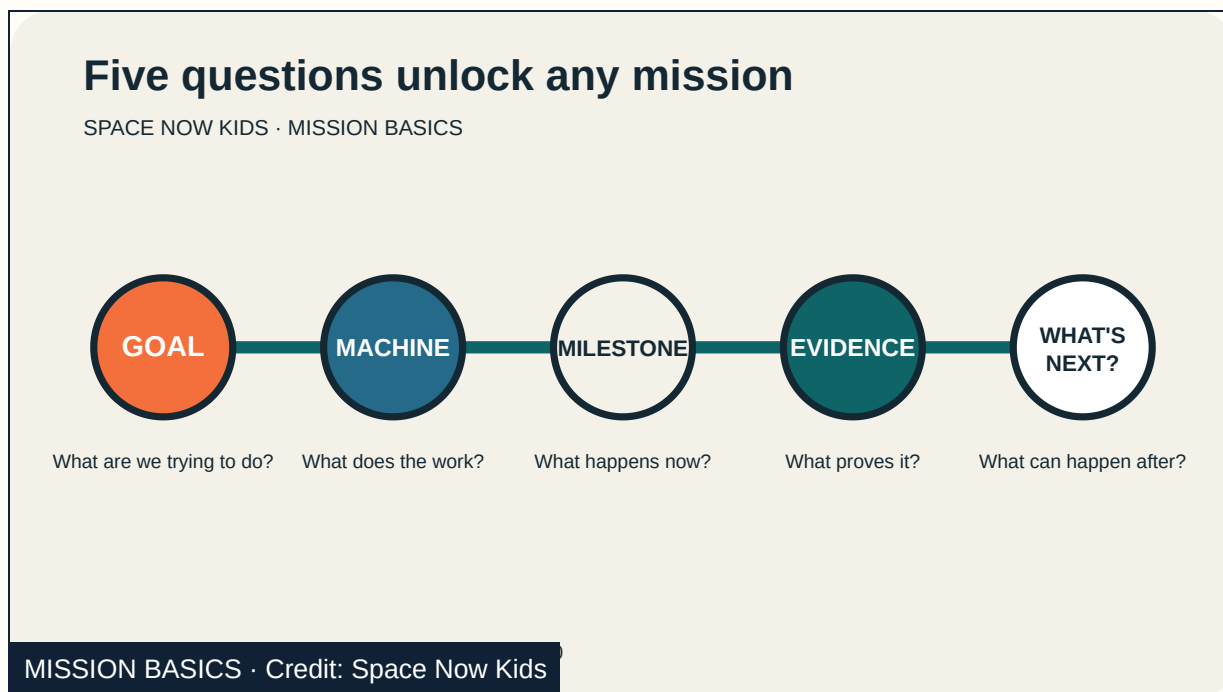
<https://www.nasa.gov/news-release/nasa-sets-briefings-for-spacex-crew-13-mission-to-space-station/>

Sequence graphic: Space Now Kids · ENGINEERING DIAGRAM · NOT TO SCALE · EXPECTED

MISSION BASICS · KEEP THIS PAGE

Five questions unlock any mission

Use this visual primer again for another mission.



GOAL

What change is the team trying to make? Crew-13's immediate goal is to carry four people safely toward the space station.

MACHINE

Which hardware does each job? Falcon 9 provides the launch push. Dragon carries and protects the crew.

MILESTONE

What is the next hard step? Liftoff, orbit, approach, and docking are separate milestones.

EVIDENCE

What signal, image, motion, or official result proves that step happened?

NEXT

What can happen only after this milestone succeeds?

Point this out

A mission can succeed at one milestone while the next is still waiting.

Ask

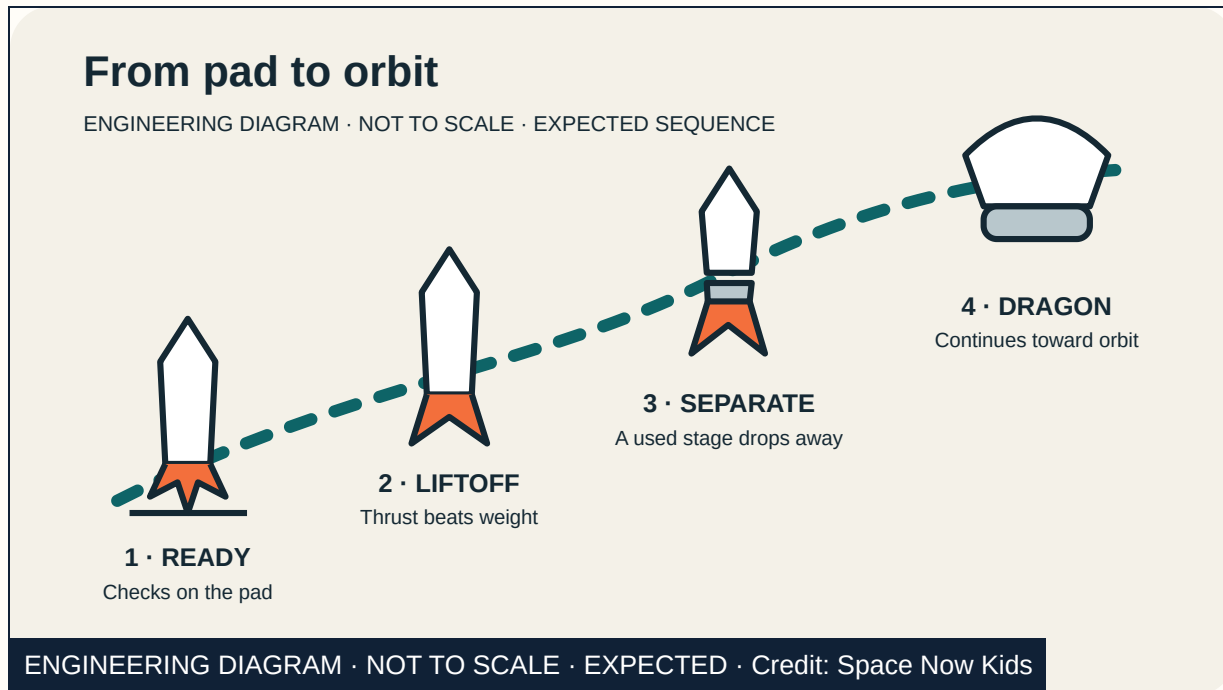
Which part proves the mission did what it was supposed to do?

Fact IDs: 21bcecf8600e3ed5869f11d5d6e23a0497a781947b51a925200611ab36fbd9ab · 8c9e646466375c93f0e483faefdb4eefd94b626c964adf323805105a63a3dc01

MISSION BASICS · KEEP THIS PAGE

Launch is a relay race

Use this visual primer again for another mission.

**COUNTDOWN → IGNITION**

The team checks readiness. Ignition starts the engines; liftoff begins only when thrust is strong enough to raise the vehicle.

STAGING

A stage carries engines and fuel for part of the climb. When its job is finished, it separates so the remaining vehicle does not carry empty hardware.

ORBIT

Reaching space is not the same as staying there. In orbit, the craft moves sideways so fast that it keeps falling around Earth instead of straight down.

Point this out

Listen for each handoff. One machine finishing its job lets the next one begin.

Ask

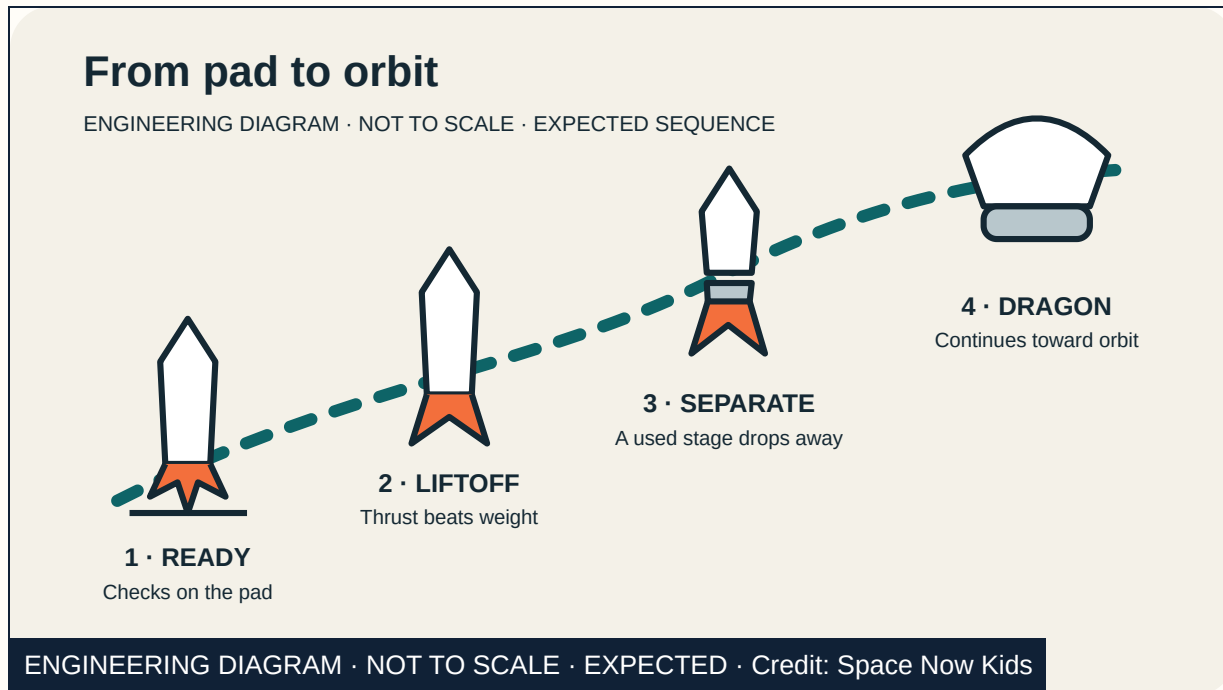
At which handoff does Dragon become the main vehicle?

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MISSION BASICS · KEEP THIS PAGE

Rocket, spacecraft, payload

Use this visual primer again for another mission.



ROCKET

The powerful ride that provides most of the push off Earth. For Crew-13, that is Falcon 9.

SPACECRAFT

The vehicle that keeps operating after the rocket's job ends. Dragon supports the crew, changes orbit, and docks.

PAYLOAD

The people, cargo, or instrument being carried to do the mission's useful work. Sometimes a spacecraft is also the payload during launch.

Point this out

Broadcasts change names because responsibility moves from one machine to another.

Ask

Who or what is the payload during Crew-13's launch?

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