

# Memorising Revision Notes Through Imaginative Association

## Revision Notes On A Historical Topic

### About This Revision Strategy

This example demonstrates the power of imaginative association. In this left column you will find notes on 5 significant historical events during the U.S. and Soviet space race. In the right column you will find a story depicting visual scenes. Each point in the right column relates to the corresponding point in the left column. The visually imagined scenes outlined in the right column should trigger memory for information in the left column.

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### Sputnik 1 (1957)

**First artificial satellite in space (a Russian achievement). It marked the beginning of the 'space race'.**

**United States very concerned. Eisenhower referred to it as the "Sputnik Crisis".**

## Imaginative Association "Film"

### Setting The Geographical Context

*It's a cold, dark evening on NASA's launch premises. You're standing no more than 100 meters from a space shuttle set to launch. You're surrounded by wide open space and a few buildings that look like aircraft hangers. Cheering crowds with banners gather around the perimeter of the launch base. You can feel the heat from the shuttle's rockets on one side of your face, in sharp contrast to the cool temperature of the air. That distinctive petrol smell fills your nostrils.*

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### Chapter 1 (visual peg: gun)

*Rupert Murdoch (the founder of Sky TV) taps you on the shoulder and proudly shows off his long-barrelled glass revolver that reflects the colours of the rainbow like a prism. A Sky digital dish is affixed to the end of it. The Soviet symbol for communism (a hammer and sickle) has been tattooed to Rupert Murdoch's forehead. Mr Murdoch kneels on one knee and fires the sky digital satellite dish into the sky. You watch as it gets smaller and smaller until it disappears entirely into the night.*

*Captain America is taking a shower in a cubicle not far from Rupert Murdoch. Rather than merrily soaping himself, he's*

**The same rocket that launched Sputnik could deliver a nuclear warhead anywhere in the world in minutes.**

*sat on the floor of the shower with his knees up by his chest looking very perplexed over the satellite that Mr Murdoch fired into the sky.*

**Prompted U.S. "National Defense Education Act" (NDEA) - billions spent on science education to keep up with the Soviets.**

*The glum Captain America turns his gaze towards Rupert Murdoch. Mr Murdoch rummages around in a wooden box with a yellow and black nuclear symbol sticker on it. He fishes out a nuclear warhead and then assumes the still pose of an Olympic Javelin thrower, poised to throw the weapon into the sky.*

**Led to formation of NASA in 1958.**

*Captain America drags himself from the shower cubicle, puts on a towel, and then passes two heavy silver brief cases loaded with cash to a small crowd of scientists wearing white lab coats that have been patiently waiting outside the shower.*

*After the scientists disband, Captain America uses his finger to write the word NASA on the outside of the shower cubicle and then underlines it several times.*

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## **Luna 2 (1959)**

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## **Chapter 2 (visual peg: shoe)**

**First artificial satellite to (crash) land on the moon, or any other celestial body.**

*Rupert Murdoch puts on a pair of studded Rugby boots. He places another Sky dish on the floor, takes a few steps back, and then kicks the Sky dish into the air. The dish rockets towards the moon at high speed culminating an explosion on the surface of the moon that is visible from earth as a tiny flash of light.*

**Confirmed scientific results of Luna 1, which missed an impact with the moon due to a malfunction at launch.**

*In orbit of the moon, a scientist riding a sky dish with the words "Luna 1" inscribed on it notices the explosion on the moon and presents an enthusiastic thumbs up to Mr Murdoch down on Earth.*

**Psychological impact was most**

*Rupert Murdoch returns the thumbs up*

**notable. Khrushchev arrived in the U.S. and handed president Eisenhower a copy of one of the Soviet pennants aboard Luna 2.**

*and then proudly strolls over to Captain America, taps him on the shoulder, and hands him an antenna from a Sky dish. Captain America accepts the token with the most genuine smile he can muster.*

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### **Sputnik 2 (1960)**

**First space flight to send animals into space and return them safely (dogs: Belka and Strelka).**

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### **Chapter 3 (visual peg: tree)**

*Two adorable little puppies yap for help from the branch of a nearby tree. Rupert Murdoch promptly scales the tree and retrieves the two canines. One dog has a bell attached to its collar, the other a picture of a naked man on a football pitch. Mr Murdoch steers them towards an open space. He attaches another one of his Sky dishes to them like a sleigh to reindeer. Two spuds (potatoes) have been skewered on the satellite dish. The dogs begin to accelerate rapidly and just like Father Christmas' reindeer they begin to take flight. The dogs disappear over the eastern horizon. Some time later they reappear from the western horizon and then glide down safely into Rupert Murdoch's open arms.*

**An important milestone in the pursuit of sending humans into space safely.**

*The safe return of the dogs is of great comfort to a nearby man in a space suit which, oddly, has a pair of Viking horns protruding out of the helmet. He claps his hands together with frantic excitement.*

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### **Vostok 1 (1961)**

**Yuri Gagarin becomes first man in space in 1961 aboard space flight Vostok 1.**

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### **Chapter 4 (visual peg: door)**

*The jubilant Viking spaceman finishes off the Yogurt he has been eating and then runs over to a narrow wooden boat. The boat hovers in the air a few feet above a runway ultimately ending in a large ramp. The runway and ramp are made entirely of wooden doors that have been stuck together. The boat glides along the runway*

The Soviets achieved many other 'firsts' during the space race prior to Vostok 1, including Sputnik 1 in 1957 - first artificial satellite in space.

Major reactions around the world to Russia's manned space flight.

America fearful of Russian Technology. President Kennedy conceded that the US would not be able to match such an achievement for many years.

America also considered Vostok 1 to be major propaganda victory for communist Russia.

*and then into the air after departing the ramp.*

*The Viking ship weaves between a floating junk yard of those 3-levelled blocks that athletes stand on at the Olympics when they're awaiting their bronze, silver, or gold medals. The top level of each block has a Russian flag inserted into it.*

*The camera zooms out to the point where the Earth is fully in shot. The Viking ship can be seen travelling at great speed around the entire circumference of the Earth, creating a tidal wave of upturned land and ocean in its wake.*

*The Viking ship returns to the launch area. Captain America can be seen cowering under a rather primitive looking wooden raft, as if it were a shelter.*

*Rupert Murdoch flips over Captain America's raft and gestures for him to take a seat on it. Captain America reluctantly obliges. Mr Murdoch connects the raft to the Viking ship, which he boards, and then proceeds to tow Captain America around the perimeter of the launch base. Captain America tries his best to avoid the gaze of the watchful crowds.*

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## **Apollo 11 (1969)**

Neil Armstrong becomes first man on the moon in 1969, aboard spacecraft Apollo 11.

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## **Chapter 5 (visual peg: hive)**

*Captain America tears off one of his sleeves, revealing an unusually muscular arm, and then unhooks a bee hive that has been lodged in between the planks of his raft. He then hurls the bee hive at the Viking ship, which promptly crashes into the spectators below. The heroic Captain America averts the same fate by jumping onto a giant Polo mint as if it were a skate board (like the futuristic one featured in*

Sent message to world/Soviets--  
America is number one technological  
force.

Some historians argue that Apollo 11  
ended the space race.

Apollo programme stemmed from US-  
Soviet 'space race' - which was a  
proliferation of the 'arms race'.

Before Apollo, the Soviets took the  
initial lead in the space race.

The Cold War continued for years after  
the moon landing. Apollo 11 was more  
of an ideological/propaganda victory.

*Back To The Future II) and zooms  
upwards through the air until he can be  
seen from the ground as a silhouette  
against the moon, much like the iconic  
picture of E.T. on a bike with the moon in  
the background.*

*Feeling pretty smug about things, Captain  
America gets out his smart phone and  
composes a text message: "Dear Rupert,  
OMG - I've got the best gadgets in the  
world".*

*Captain America returns to the launch and  
comes to a halt over a black and white  
chequered area with a banner above it that  
reads "Space Race Finish Line".*

*Beneath the banner text "Space Race  
Finish Line" is some smaller text that reads  
"(arms race still underway)".*

*Rupert Murdoch struts over to Captain  
America and produces a score board of  
total wins and losses for the space race. Mr  
Murdoch highlights a string of prior wins  
for Russia.*

*Captain America responds to Rupert by  
holding his Polo above his head  
triumphantly, much to the delight of the on  
looking crowds. Rupert Murdoch, stares  
back at him with squinted eyes. The air  
remains chilly. The wind howls loudly.  
Captain America returns Mr Murdoch's  
icy stare. Neither comes close to a smile.*

# Visual Associations Cheat Sheet

We all draw different mental associations. You may not always get the associations in the space race mental *film* in the right-hand column of the table above. They're my associations. When you're constructing your own mental films you will use your own associations, which won't need explaining. But just to help you follow along with this exercise, I now present an explanation of all the visual associations.

<b>Revision Information</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
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<b>Sputnik 1 (1957)</b>		
<b>First info-chunk</b>	<i>Glass gun</i>	Gun rhymes with "one". It's a visual "peg" that marks chapter one in the <i>film</i> . It's glass because the sky branding has a glass prism effect. Glass guns are unusual and making it distinctive will help avoid confusion with guns used in a different mental <i>film</i> .
<b>Space satellite</b>	<i>Sky digital dish</i>	Both satellites of sorts
<b>Russia</b>	<i>Rupert Murdoch</i>	Top dog. "R" reminds me of Russia too.
<b>Sputnik 1</b>	<i>Single potato (spud) on Sky dish</i>	The word "spud" reminds me of Sputnik
<b>United States</b>	<i>Captain America</i>	A symbol of America
<b>President Eisenhower</b>	<i>Captain America taking a shower</i>	The word "shower" reminds me of Eisenhower
<b>Fearful over Russian Tech</b>	<i>Captain America slumped on shower floor, watching sky dish</i>	Captain America's emotions represent those of the Whitehouse.
<b>Russia could use space tech to launch nuclear weapons</b>	<i>Rupert Murdoch poised to throw a nuclear weapon</i>	Murdock's Javelin pose represents launch capabilities

<b>U.S. spends billions on science tech</b>	<i>Captain America hands some scientists briefcases of money</i>	Scientists represent science, briefcases represent spending.
<b>Formation of NASA</b>	<i>Captain America drawing the word NASA on shower cubicle</i>	Writing the word represents the formation of a new organisation
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<b>Luna 2 (1959)</b>		
<b>Second info-chunk</b>	<i>Rugby boots</i>	Shoe rhymes with "two". It's a visual "peg" that marks chapter two in the <i>film</i>
<b>Luna 2 first satellite to hit moon</b>	<i>Sky dish explodes on moon</i>	Dish on moon represents Luna 2 moon impact
<b>Confirmed scientific results of Luna 1</b>	<i>Scientist riding sky dish with Luna 1 inscribed gives thumbs up</i>	Scientist represents scientific findings. Thumbs up means no conflicting evidence.
<b>Psychological impact most notable</b>	<i>Murdock hands Captain America a token</i>	The encounter represents Russia intimidating America psychologically
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<b>Sputnik 2 (1960)</b>		
<b>Third info-chunk</b>	<i>Tree containing puppies</i>	Tree rhymes with "three". It's a visual "peg" that marks chapter three in the <i>film</i>
<b>Belka and Strelka first dogs in space aboard Sputnik 2.</b>	<i>Puppies with bell attached to collar or a picture of a naked man on a football pitch. Dogs ascend into the air with a Sky dish and two spuds (potatoes).</i>	The bell represents the first dog's name: Belka. The naked man on the football pitch is a "streaker", which prompts memory for the name "Strelka". The dogs take another satellite into the air (a space mission). The two spuds remind me of Sputnik 2. Murdock guides the

**An important milestone in sending humans to space (Vostok 1)**

*Viking spaceman claps his hands with excitement*

dogs, Murdock represents Russia, therefore it is a Russian mission.

The Viking element reminds me of the name of the spacecraft - Vostok 1.

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**Vostok 1 1961**

**Forth info-chunk**

*Wooden ramp made of doors*

Door rhymes with "four". It's a visual "peg" that marks chapter four in the *film*

**Yuri Gagarin becomes first man in space aboard Vostok 1**

*Viking spaceman eating yogurt climbs onto narrow boat and ascends into the air*

Yogurt reminds me of the name of the astronaut. The Viking ship ascending indicates another space mission.

**The Soviets achieved many first during the space race**

*The Viking ship passes three-tiered blocks with Russian flag on top level.*

The many flags at the top of the blocks represents Russia's numerous "first" space achievements'

**Major reaction around the world to Vostok 1**

*Viking ship speeds around the world upturning land and ocean*

The wave of disruption represents the global psychological reaction to Russia's technology

**America fearful of Russian tech**

*Captain America hiding beneath primitive raft*

Captain America's behaviour represents America's fear, and the raft its inferior technology.

**America saw Vostok 1 as a propaganda victory**

*Murdock tows captain America past the launch base crowds*

The public humiliation of Captain America in front of the crowds represents the propaganda victory

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**Apollo 11 (1969)**

**Fifth info-chunk**

*Bee hive in raft*

Hive rhymes with "five".

**Apollo 11 is first manned mission to the moon**

*Captain America rides a Polo mint through the sky until he is a silhouette against the moon.*

It's a visual "peg" that marks chapter five in the film

"A Polo" sounds very similar to "Apollo". The moon shot indicates the destination of the mission

**Neil Armstrong was the first astronaut on the moon**

*Captain America rips his sleeve revealing a muscular arm*

Captain America's arm represents the name Neil Armstrong

**Apollo 11 sent a message to the Soviets that America is top dog technologically**

*Captain America texts Murdock about gadgets*

Literal text message about gadgets represents non-literal message that America is once again at the forefront of technical advances.

**Apollo arguably ended the space race**

*Captain America lands by a chequered finish line*

Physical end of race track represents an end to the space race

**Space race was a proliferation of the arms race**

*Banner text explaining another kind of race (arms race) was still underway*

Text on banner says it all. Including the odd word or phrase in visual films can be a surprisingly effective cheat (a cheat because you're not encoding the revision information into something purely visual)

**Soviets had an initial lead in the space race**

*Murdock presents Captain America with a score board*

The score board wins and losses represents landmarks in the space race, in which Russia took the lead

**The Cold War continued. Apollo 11 was more of a propaganda victory.**

*Captain America holds his Polo mint to the crowds. The two characters exchange icy stares.*

Raising the polo mint to the crowds represents the propaganda victory. The icy stares represent the ongoing animosity of the Cold War.

This example is an extract from the book "[The Silver String Technique: Revise Smart, Achieve More](#)", which discusses the method in detail. S