

Name _____

Date _____

Ellen Ochoa - Answer Key

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Ellen Ochoa was born on May 10, 1958, in Los Angeles, California, and grew up in La Mesa, California. Her paternal grandparents were Mexican immigrants from Sonora, Mexico. From a young age, Ochoa excelled in school and developed a love for playing music, especially the flute. Her love for playing the flute continued on as she entered college at San Diego State University. She was part of the university's wind ensemble and even considered majoring in music. But Ochoa also had a deep interest in math and science and decided to major in physics instead. After graduating college, she went on to pursue her masters degree and doctorate in engineering at Stanford University. In 1983, while Ochoa was in the middle of getting her PhD, Sally Ride rocketed into space, making her the first American woman in space. Ochoa recalled when she was 11 years old, the Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon. At that time, there weren't any women astronauts, so it didn't cross her mind that she could become one. But watching Sally Ride achieve a big milestone inspired Ochoa to become an astronaut.

Which of the following statements is true?

A. Ochoa regrets not majoring in music.



B.

Sally Ride inspired Ochoa's decision to become an astronaut.

According to the passage, "...watching Sally Ride achieve a big milestone inspired Ochoa to become an astronaut."

C. Ochoa's interest in playing the flute was greater than her interest in STEM.

D. Ochoa's grandparents wanted her to become an astronaut.

2. In 1985, right after receiving her doctorate, Ochoa applied for the NASA astronaut training program. Ochoa continued research at Sandia National Laboratories in the field of optics and image processing. She became a co-designer on three patents for an optical system that would help scientists better analyze detailed images. When selection time came around in 1987, she was not accepted into the training program. But this did not deter Ochoa—she applied two more times and was finally accepted in 1990. On April 8, 1993, Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman in space. On the space shuttle, Discovery, Ochoa and the crew studied the effects of the sun on Earth’s environment. Ochoa even brought her flute aboard, combining her love for music and STEM. This was one of four successful missions she embarked on during her career, logging nearly 1,000 hours in orbit.

Which of the following statements would Ochoa most likely agree with?

- A. Space exploration takes too much time and is not worth the money it costs for missions.
- B. It’s better to focus on one interest rather than having multiple interests.
- C. Becoming an astronaut is an easy task.
- ☒ D. It’s important to continue going after your dreams even if you face obstacles.

According to the passage, “When selection time came around in 1987, she was not accepted into the training program. But this did not deter Ochoa—she applied two more times and was finally accepted in 1990.”

3. Ochoa recognized she wouldn't have been able to choose this career path if it weren't for the women who paved the way before her. So on her third space mission in 1999, Ochoa unfurled a flag used by the National Women's Party in space to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Convention. Ochoa continued her work for NASA and became the first Hispanic director of the Johnson Space Center in 2013. She was also inducted into the US Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2017. After nearly 30 years of working for NASA, Ochoa retired in 2018, but Ochoa's story continues to inspire others today. Her bilingual children's book, **We Are All Scientists**, encourages young students to embrace their inner scientists and go after their dreams.

Why did Ochoa bring the National Women's Party flag to space?

A. She wanted to use it as an experiment on board.



B.

She wanted to honor women who paved the way before her.

According to the passage, "Ochoa recognized she wouldn't have been able to choose this career path if it weren't for the women who paved the way before her." In honor of the women who came before her, she "unfurled a flag used by the National Women's Party in space to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Convention."

C. The flag had her favorite colors.

D. It was a tradition to bring the flag to space every year.