

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# José Hernández

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b'

José Hernández is a Mexican American astronaut who was born in California in 1962. Hernández's parents were migrant farmworkers. During his early childhood, Hernández split his time between California and Mexico. Each March, his family would travel from Mexico to California to pick fruits and vegetables. They would work their way from Southern California to Northern California until December. His family would return to Mexico for three months until it was time to start the cycle again. José and his siblings worked alongside their parents on weekends during the school year and seven days a week in the summer. Although his parents stressed the importance of education, the constant moving made it hard for Hernández to keep up in school.

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2. b'

Eventually, Hernández and his family moved to Stockton, California full time. This allowed Hernández to focus on his schoolwork and improve his ability to speak English. At the age of 10, Hernández's dream of becoming an astronaut began when he watched the Apollo 17 moon landing. He would go outside, look at the moon, and go back inside to see the astronauts walking on the moon's surface. That night, he shared his dream with his father. His father said to make a plan and put his effort into his education:  
 "Always do more than people expect,  
 m'hijo."

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3. b'

Hernández's interest in science and engineering blossomed. As a senior in high school, Hernández was working in a field when he heard on the radio that Franklin Chang-Díaz had been selected to become an astronaut. The first Hispanic American astronaut ever, someone who looked like him, was going to space. He felt closer to his dream than ever before. Hernández graduated high school and enrolled at the University of the Pacific. He earned a degree in electrical engineering and a full scholarship to a graduate program at University of California, Santa Barbara.

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4. b'

After UCSB, Hernández went on to have a successful career at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. He later became an engineer at NASA's Johnson Space Center. He applied for NASA's astronaut program 11 times and was rejected every time. He nearly gave up, but decided to keep pursuing his dream. On his 12th application, Hernández was accepted as a member of the 19th class of astronauts in 2004. He completed his astronaut training in 2006. In 2009, Hernández and the rest of the STS-128 crew completed a 14-day mission to the International Space Station. Today, Hernández runs an organization called Reaching for the Stars that helps inspire students to study STEM.

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