This lesson is designed to generate discussion in students regarding the common Lunar conspiracy theories. Through looking at statements, analysing the reliability of the sources, and critically analysing the comments and applying scientific principles, students will come to their own conclusions about whether the US really did land on the Moon.

OVERRVIEW

Critical thinking.
Analysing sources for reliability.
Any theory must be tested and peer reviewed.

WHAT YOU NEED

- A10 Moon conspiracies PowerPoint
- 10.1 Moon hoax briefing sheet (one per student)
- 10.2 Statements sheets (one set, printed and cut in half)
- 10.3 Conspiracies analysis worksheet (two per student)
- 10.4 Evidence cards (one set per group of 4 – cut out)

STARTER

Show students the first 5 slides of the Moon conspiracies powerpoint to set the scene of the space race within the cold war.

Explain that there are some people who believe that the US never did successfully land on the Moon, and in this lesson they are going to investigate some statements to decide whether they are in support of, or against the Moon landings, and to think about the reliability of the sources.

Ask students whether they think we did go to the Moon and why and fill this in on their sheet.

ACTIVITY 10

moon hoax briefing

There are still quite a lot of people who believe that the Moon landings were a hoax – this means that they think they never actually happened!

In this activity you are going to look at some of the conspiracy arguments that are used and analyse them in terms of science, and source credibility to come to answer the question – did we really go to the Moon?

Watch the video of Neil Armstrong setting foot on the Moon for the first time in 1969.

Around the room are several sheets with statements about the Moon landings. By considering the sources, and the content of the statement, discuss whether you think it is a credible argument and whether is evidence that the Moon landings were real, or fake.

Record a description of the evidence and your opinion of how strong it is in the Moon conspiracies table.

At the end of the lesson, think again about whether you think we went to the Moon or not. If your opinion has changed, explain why:

You will then be given a set of evidence cards and need to decide whether these support or disprove the statements.

Can you think of any arguments that have been made to suggest that the Apollo missions were fake? Can you think of anything that proves we really did go? Summarise your ideas below and discuss as a class.

Initial thought:
Do you think we went to the Moon?

10.1 MOON HOAX BRIEFING

The activity has been designed to help students think about the evidence given and the reliability of the sources.

Students will discuss their views and consider the evidence presented in the activity, before completing the Moon Conspiracies worksheet at the end of the lesson.

In the activity, students will be asked to consider the reliability of the sources used to support or oppose the Moon landings. They will then be asked to summarise their conclusions and discuss them with their peers.

The Moon Conspiracies worksheet will be used to assess students’ understanding of the lesson and their ability to evaluate evidence.

The activity will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and can be used as part of a Science lesson or as a stand-alone activity.
MAIN ACTIVITY 1

Analysing the statements: Working in pairs, students go around the room and read the conspiracy statements. They discuss the statements and sources, and summarise these in their tables, deciding whether the statement is for or against the lunar landings.

Once they have done this, show the statements summary PowerPoint slide. Give each student a post it note and ask them to stick in on the statement that they think is the most compelling. Compare the whole class results and discuss.

MAIN ACTIVITY 2

Applying the evidence: Get two pairs to work together as a group of 4.

Now hand out the evidence cards and ask the students to read through them, deciding which of the statements these cards support or disprove and filling their answers in on the table. In their pairs they should now discuss which of the statements are most compelling in the light of new evidence.

Again, bring up the statement slide and again ask students to place a post-it note on the most compelling statement. Discuss any changes.

PLENARY

Mythbusting: Run through the slides on mythbusting the three most common Moon conspiracies using scientific reasoning and working with the class to establish explanations. If there is time, show the Mythbusters clips to support the explanations. Finish with asking the class what their view is now on the Moon landings and discuss whether any one’s view has changed in the face of ideas and evidence.