



## Weekly Discussion Questions 4/14/2025

[Apple, Charles. "Houston, We've Had a Problem." \*The Spokesman-Review\*, 13 Apr. 2025, p. D7.](#)

### Classroom Discussion Questions College Level

**Crisis Leadership and Systems Thinking:** The Apollo 13 mission highlights the intersection of leadership, engineering, and real-time problem-solving under extreme pressure. How did the decision-making frameworks used by NASA during this crisis reflect principles of systems thinking and adaptive leadership? What lessons can be drawn for modern crisis management in fields like public health, cybersecurity, or aviation?

**Innovation in Constraint-Driven Environments:** Apollo 13 is often cited as a landmark case of "innovation under constraint"—engineers and astronauts had to repurpose existing materials and systems to survive. In what ways does this align with modern design thinking or frugal innovation models? How might this approach inform sustainability practices or technology development in resource-limited settings?

**Narrative, Memory, and the Cultural Impact of Apollo 13:** Despite being a "failed" lunar mission, Apollo 13 occupies a significant place in American cultural memory. How have media portrayals (such as films and books) shaped public understanding of the mission? What does the enduring fascination with Apollo 13 suggest about how societies remember and celebrate resilience and ingenuity in the face of failure?

### Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 9-12

**Decision-Making Under Pressure:** After the explosion on Apollo 13, NASA engineers had to quickly find alternatives to bring the astronauts home safely—such as using the lunar module as a lifeboat and writing emergency code for course correction. What does this say about the importance of critical thinking and teamwork in high-stakes situations? Can you think of a modern scenario (in space, science, or elsewhere) where similar skills are crucial?

**Innovation with Limited Resources:** The crew and engineers had to create a working carbon dioxide filter using duct tape, ripped manuals, and other onboard materials. What does this reveal about the role of creativity and adaptability in problem-solving? How might this lesson apply to careers beyond space exploration?

**Historical Significance and Media Representation:** Apollo 13 is remembered not just for its near-tragedy, but for its successful recovery and human ingenuity. Why do you think this mission continues to capture public imagination? How has it been portrayed in books, films, or documentaries, and how does that shape our understanding of history?

### Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 6-8

**Working Together in an Emergency:** When the oxygen tank exploded on Apollo 13, the astronauts and NASA engineers had to act fast to keep everyone safe. Why is teamwork so important during emergencies? Can you think of a time when people had to work together quickly to solve a problem?

**Solving Problems with What You Have:** The astronauts used duct tape, paper, and other items on the spaceship to build a tool that cleaned the air. Why do you think it's important to be creative and think outside the box when you don't have everything you need? Can you think of a time you had to get creative to fix a problem?

**Why We Still Talk About Apollo 13:** Even though Apollo 13 didn't land on the moon, people still talk about it today. Why do you think this space mission is still remembered after so many years? What makes it such an inspiring story?

### **Classroom Discussion Questions Grades 1-5**

**Teamwork in Space:** The astronauts and the people at NASA had to work together to fix a big problem. Why is it important to be a good team member? Can you think of a time you worked with others to solve something hard?

**Making Things with What You Have:** The astronauts used tape, paper, and other items to fix their spaceship. Have you ever made something new using things you found at home or in class? How did it help?

**A Story People Still Remember:** Even though Apollo 13 didn't land on the moon, people still talk about it today. Why do you think people remember this story? What do you think was the most exciting or brave part?