

Rockets

Rockets include any missile, spacecraft, aircraft, or other vehicle that obtains thrust from a rocket engine, whose exhaust is formed entirely from propellant carried within the rocket. Rocket engines work by action and reaction, pushing themselves forwards simply by expelling their exhaust backwards at high speed, and, unlike jets, they can therefore work in the vacuum of space.

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The first gunpowder-powered rockets appeared in medieval China, and the invention spread westward in the mid-13th century. Medieval and early modern rockets were deployed as incendiary weapons during sieges.

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Modern rockets originated in 1926 when Goddard experimented with attaching a supersonic nozzle to the combustion chamber of a liquid-propellant rocket. Use of liquid fuel instead of gunpowder greatly improved the accuracy of rocket artillery and the aim of rocket-propelled bombs in World War II and opened up the possibility of human spaceflight.

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During the Cold War, rockets became extremely important with the development of intercontinental ballistic missiles for the delivery of nuclear weapons. The 1960s saw rapid development of rocket technology, particularly in the former Soviet Union and United States. Rockets were also used for space exploration, culminating in 1969 with the first crew landing on the Moon.

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What fuel was used in the first rockets?

What were rockets used for in the medieval period?

Why were rockets important during the cold war?