

## The interview

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### FC: How did your morning start today?

**Thelma:** Things began well this morning. The morning shift of flight controllers arrived from 08:00 hours to do the handover from the overnight shift. Each shift lasts nine hours and there are three shifts a day. It's a lot of shifts, as we function 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Today, the handover was completed and the overnight shift were out the door, with 10 minutes to spare before the morning duties officially began with the shift check-in. This took only 10 minutes today. The 23 flight controllers who were rostered on today were all present, as well as a small group of interns who are training alongside them.

### FC: What are the interns doing at Mission Control?

**Thelma:** The interns are shadowing the flight controllers to learn more about the specific jobs that they do. Currently, Taj is working with four of the six interns on some specialised training in preparation for the final spacewalk, which will happen before the crew leaves the ISS. Their training today took an hour and a half. They started just a few minutes after the shift check-in finished.

### FC: Do you get visitors to Mission Control?

**Thelma:** At the moment we have eight Years 9 and 10 STEM students from Australia visiting. Two of the flight controllers, Tim and Kayla, left to take the students back to the viewing platform just as Taj and the interns returned from their training. It took 2 minutes for all the students to get through security and arrive on the floor of Mission Control. They had a special 30 minute session with the controllers as part of their participation in a 2-week NASA space camp. When the presentation was finished, it took Tim and Kayla another 2 minutes to escort them back up to the viewing platform.

### FC: Why is there a doctor on the Mission Control team?

**Thelma:** The doctor, John, looks after the health of the astronauts. He is currently researching space headaches — this is an ongoing experiment that is looking at how high levels of carbon dioxide on the ISS may be triggering 'space headaches' in some crew members. Four minutes after Taj left with the interns, John left the room to speak with the astronauts on the ISS. He said he would need only 10 minutes but it took twice as long as expected. John logged out of the conversation and returned only a few minutes before the whole ISS crew and MCC team had a scheduled meeting about an interesting science experiment being conducted on plant growth in space.

### FC: Do the astronauts go for many spacewalks?

**Thelma:** They do — in fact, there was a spacewalk today! Three of the flight controllers, Khalid, Zedan and Lily, left the meeting on plant growth to provide urgent assistance to the Expedition Commander, who was working outside on the space station. From an adjoining studio, Khalid, Zedan and Lily gave him instructions on how to move a robotic arm. This began halfway between the start of the meeting on plant growth and the time when Tim and Kayla left to get the Australian STEM students. The procedure took only 4 minutes and, when I glanced at the clock, I noticed that it showed 3 minutes past 10.

**FC: It sounds extraordinarily busy in Mission Control?**

**Thelma:** It certainly is! Despite the interruptions we were all able to continue with our scheduled meetings. I was fortunate this morning that I was able to take a few minutes to go up to the viewing platform to talk to the Australian students, too. Would you believe that all of the MCC team were back in the room and at their consoles for only 13 minutes before the scheduled 20 minute emergency drill began at 11:00 hours? And that was only the first part of the shift today!

**The film crew asked Thelma five more questions, which are given below.**

**What is the answer to each of these questions?**

1. For how many minutes were all the flight controllers and interns together this morning in the Mission Control Centre?
2. At what time did Taj and the interns get back from their training?
3. How long was spent on the meeting about growing plants in space?
4. During what times were there the least and the most people in the MCC this morning?
5. At what times of the day are there likely to be twice as many people as usual in the MCC? Why?