

PRUEBA DE ACCESO A LA UNIVERSIDAD Y/O FASE VOLUNTARIA
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ASIGNATURA/IRAKASGAIA

INGLÉS / INGELESA

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE AN ASTRONAUT?

In February 2021, the European Space Agency (ESA) announced it would be recruiting a new astronaut class, the first since 2008. It encouraged applicants from a broader spectrum of gender, physical ability, age, and ethnicity. My name is Kevin Fong and I decided to try. I also joined a WhatsApp group of like-minded hopefuls. There were 23,000 applicants. To be selected, you had to have a couple of degrees in science, preferably in different disciplines, with at least one at master's level or above. **5**

Against all odds, I made the smaller group of approximately 1,500 who went on to the next stage in Hamburg, Germany. We did classroom tests and video games: maths and physics quizzes, some psychometric screening and a bunch of fiendishly difficult pilot aptitude tests. The competitors in the room were impressive: intrepid oceanographers, particle physicists, military test pilots and Antarctic explorers, to list but a few. Given the calibre of my fellow applicants, I was shocked, some weeks later, to get a call for the next round of selection at the ESA Astronaut Centre in Cologne. Just 400 of us left. **10**

The testing day was brutal. Lengthy interrogations, psychological evaluations and professional parlour games followed, alone and in groups. The next round of testing was in Toulouse. I think I yelled out loud when I opened the invitation. Down to the final 91 now. At ESA's medical evaluation centre, the examination was exhaustive. To check our hearts, they made us run on a treadmill, hooked up to an electrocardiogram machine. I noticed that my heart was making abnormal beats. The medical team noticed them too. We exchanged uncomfortable glances. I hoped beyond hope that I might somehow sneak through. My email came around midday: a note thanking me for taking part but telling me that – for medical reasons beyond my control – I would go no further in the process. Game over. **20**

It was a hard process to fall out of, but my participation in the process of chasing the stars fuelled my ambitions in science and medicine and led to the career I continue to love here on Earth as a doctor. However, there is a bittersweet epilogue to this story that makes me feel sad. ESA trumpeted its intention to put diversity at the centre of this selection, but in this new astronaut class, there is – once again – an absence of ethnic diversity. It is a source of great sadness that a new generation of European children will gaze upon this latest ESA astronaut class without seeing themselves reflected. **30**

1. Answer these questions about the text in your own words (2 points, 1 each).

- a. Describe in your own words what happened to Kevin in Toulouse and what the consequences were.
- b. Why does Kevin feel sad?

2. Read the following statements, decide whether they are true or false and justify your answer by quoting evidence from the text (1 point, 0.50 each).

- a. During the selection process in Hamburg, the author competed against candidates from similar professional backgrounds.
- b. The author's experience with the ESA selection process had a positive impact on his current career path.

3. Find words or expressions in the text that mean the following (1 point, 0.25 each).

- a. Sharing similar opinions or goals (paragraph 1).
- b. Chances or probability of success in a certain undertaking (paragraph 2).
- c. Shouted loudly (paragraph 3).
- d. Look, stare (paragraph 4).

4. Rephrase FOUR of the following sentences beginning as shown (2 points, 0.5 each).

- a. The judges needed 18 months to complete the selection process.
It took.....
- b. Even though Kevin had difficulties, he didn't throw in the towel.
Despite.....
- c. The agency should not allow any candidate with a heart condition to continue the training.
Under no circumstances.....
- d. The candidate didn't make it to the second round because he did not speak languages.
If.....
- e. "Why don't we repeat the ECG to be sure?" said the cardiologist.
The cardiologist suggested
- f. It's possible that the medical team was worried when they saw the ECG.
The medical team might

5. Write a composition of around 140-180 words on ONE of the following topics (4 points).

- a. You went through a selection process to become an astronaut and were eliminated. You believe the reasons for your elimination were unfair. Write a **complaint letter** to the selection committee explaining what happened and why you think it was unfair.
- b. Write an **opinion essay** on the importance of mental and physical strength for becoming an astronaut.

Los criterios de corrección y calificación de los exámenes pueden consultarse en la web:

<https://www.unavarra.es/sites/estudios/acceso-y-admision/evau-para-estudiantes.html>

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