



Record Breaker

What is the Mariana Trench?

- The Mariana Trench is a crescent-shaped trench in the Pacific Ocean.
- The deepest known point in it is called Challenger Deep.

Illustration: Kathy Sullivan.

Kathy Sullivan Visits Deepest Point

Over 550 people have been into space; only eight have been to Challenger Deep, the deepest known point in the ocean. Now, though, Kathy Sullivan has become the first person to do both!

Kathy Sullivan used to be an astronaut. She recently went down to Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, in the Pacific Ocean. It's the deepest point in the world's oceans!

She was only the eighth person to ever reach the deepest part of the ocean and she was also the first woman to do so.

Kathy slowly went down for almost 11 000m into the Mariana Trench.

That is so deep that you could hide the highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest, in it.

You wouldn't see the mountain, though. Its peak would still be more than 2km below the waves.

The journey down took around four hours. But, she couldn't stay for long because of the enormous water pressure down there. At that

depth, it is like having 2200 tonnes of force pushing down on their small submersible.

So how does it feel to have been in space and visited the deepest point? Kathy said, it was "a once in a lifetime day, seeing the moonscape of the Challenger Deep and then comparing notes with my colleagues on the ISS [International Space Station]".

This is because, when Kathy made it back to the ship, she put in a call... to the International Space Station!

Glossary

trench	A deep area of an ocean.
peak	The pointed top of a mountain.
water pressure	The force that the weight of water puts on an object as it goes deeper.
submersible	A small craft designed to operate under water.

Questions

1. How long did it take for the submersible to reach the deepest point in the ocean?

2. When Kathy said "A once in a lifetime day, seeing the moonscape of the Challenger Deep and then comparing notes with my colleagues on the ISS", what do you think she meant by the word 'moonscape'? Tick one.

- ☐ She means that she has been to the Moon.
- ☐ She means that the bottom of the Mariana Trench is made of cheese.
- ☐ She means that the Mariana Trench is on the Moon.
- ☐ She means that the bottom of the Mariana Trench looks like the Moon's surface.

3. Tick to say whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The Mariana Trench is deeper than Mount Everest is tall.		
Kathy Sullivan still works as an astronaut.		
Kathy Sullivan was the first person to reach Challenger Deep.		
Kathy Sullivan was the first woman to reach Challenger Deep.		

4. Reread the paragraph beginning 'The journey down.'
Find and copy a word that means the same as 'large'.

5. Why do you think Kathy Sullivan phoned the International Space Station?

6. Write a summary of the story in 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. How long did it take for the submersible to reach the deepest point in the ocean?

It took around four hours.

2. When Kathy said “A once in a lifetime day, seeing the moonscape of the Challenger Deep and then comparing notes with my colleagues on the ISS”, what do you think she meant by the word ‘moonscape’? Tick one.

- ☐ She means that she has been to the Moon.
- ☐ She means that the bottom of the Mariana Trench is made of cheese.
- ☐ She means that the Mariana Trench is on the Moon.
- ☒ **She means that the bottom of the Mariana Trench looks like the Moon’s surface.**

3. Tick to say whether each statement is true or false.

	True	False
The Mariana Trench is deeper than Mount Everest is tall.	✓	
Kathy Sullivan still works as an astronaut.		✓
Kathy Sullivan was the first person to reach Challenger Deep.		✓
Kathy Sullivan was the first woman to reach Challenger Deep.	✓	

4. Reread the paragraph beginning ‘The journey down.’
Find and copy a word that means the same as ‘large’.

enormous

5. Why do you think Kathy Sullivan phoned the International Space Station?

Accept any answer that refers to the fact that she was an astronaut or that she became the first person to go into space and to visit Challenger Deep, e.g. I think she phoned the International Space Station because she used to be an astronaut.

6. Write a summary of the story in 20 words or fewer.

**Accept an answer of 20 words or fewer which includes the main facts from the story.
E.g. Kathy Sullivan has become the only person to go to space and visit Challenger Deep.**