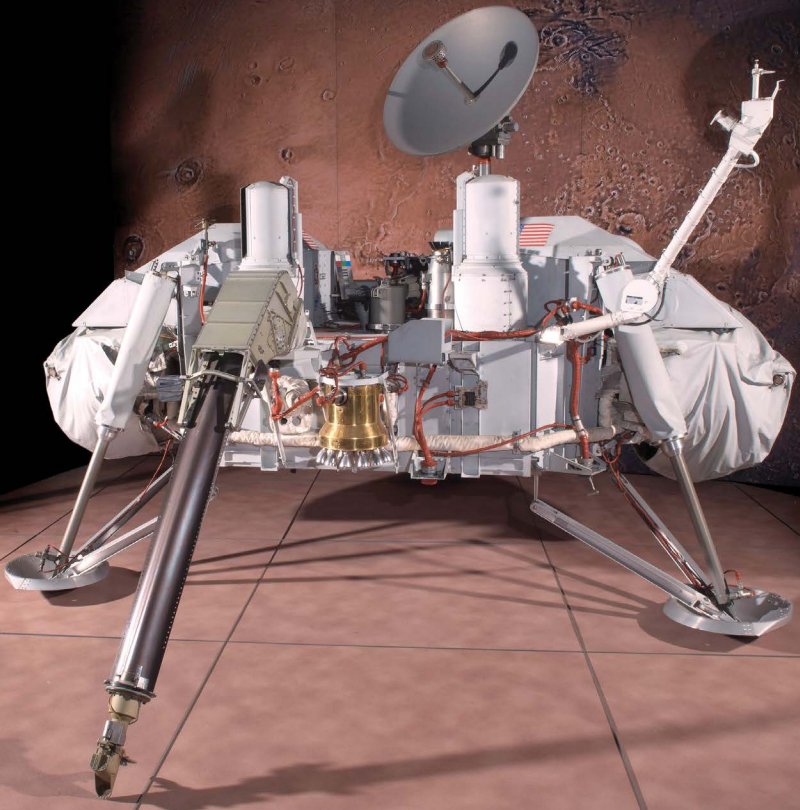




FIRST MARS LANDING



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Chapter
ONE

VIKING 1



Viking 1 traveled 11 months through outer space to reach Mars.

VIKING 1 speeds through outer space at 18,000 miles per hour. It is on an incredible mission. **NASA** hopes this spacecraft will be its first to touch down on Mars!

On June 19, 1976, *Viking 1* enters **orbit** around the Red Planet. A month later, it separates into two parts. The **orbiter** circles Mars while the **lander** plunges toward the planet.

CHAPTER ONE

Rockets fire to slow the lander. But will it be enough? The planet's surface is quickly approaching, and the lander is plummeting at nearly 600 miles per hour.

Whoosh! A large parachute opens. The lander slows even more. But it's still falling fast.

As the craft nears the surface, more rockets fire. Miraculously, *Viking 1* makes a gentle touchdown.

Back on Earth, everyone at mission control leaps from their seats. Cheers ring out. On July 20, 1976, *Viking 1* made the first successful landing on Mars.

Exploration of the Red Planet has truly begun!

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