**Year 8 ILT Spring Term**

**Reading Comprehension 2- The International Space Station**

Read the passage carefully and then complete the tasks below.

*This text describes the International Space Station and gives the reader some factual information about it.*

The International Space Station Did you know that there are astronauts up in space this very minute? They are not walking on the moon, but they are part of a **unique** outer space research project called the International Space Station (ISS).

The ISS project began in the mid-1990s when the USA merged its plan for space station Freedom with Russia’s plan for its Mir 2 station. This **merger** was especially important because the USA and Russia were previously competitors over space exploration. Overcoming their differences, they joined with the space agencies of Europe, Canada, and Japan to create the first permanently-manned earth-orbiting research laboratory.

The ISS is being built to focus on long-term life sciences. Astronauts are trying to observe how organisms adapt to a weightless environment. They are constantly experimenting with different ways that humans could survive in space. Just think: the research conducted on the ISS might change the way humans live in years to come.

Since its **inception**, construction on the ISS has slowly progressed. In the year 2000, the first crew members boarded the station to begin work. There were two Russians and one American. In its current state, the station cannot accommodate more than three astronauts. The sixteen participating countries hope to complete the ISS by 2010, when the station will house a crew of six astronauts.

1. Based on their use in the following quotations, what do you think each of these key vocabulary mean?
   1. “they are part of a **unique** outer space research project called the International Space Station
      * Individual
      * Isolated
      * Large
   2. “This **merger** was especially important”
      * Relationship
      * Combination
      * Conflict
   3. “Since its **inception**, construction on the ISS has slowly progressed”
      * Formation
      * Creativity
      * Independence
2. List one FACT about the space stations Freedom and Mir 2.
3. Describe the relationship between Russia and the USA historically.
4. What effect might the research done on the ISS have on the future?
5. When did the first crew members start work on the ISS?
6. In what year did scientists hope to have finished work on the ISS?
7. Complete the following sentence: Work on the International Space Station has taken so long because…
8. Write a summary on the key details of this text in no more than 100 words.