Ad Astra Aspera: Humanity's Greatest Collaboration

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We selected the International Space Station (ISS) for our National History Day project after exploring dozens of research possibilities. We were immediately fascinated by the sheer complexity and the deeper story that many people don't comprehend. The ISS truly encapsulates years of negotiations, engineering, breakthroughs, and coordinated efforts to work for humanities well being. Just as the ISS's construction began, the research we needed to continue building it couldn't have been done without the collaboration of humanity. Multiple nations had to overcome financial obstacles to make the ISS possible, demonstrating international collaboration despite early uncertainty.

Our research began with gathering broad information, such as understanding the story, its origins, timeline, and purpose. We used this information to better understand the best sources to use, given the ISS's over 40 years of history. We started with sources from the Coastal Carolina University's Databases to obtain primary information on influential turning points in its construction, press coverage, and conferences that debated its construction. After we researched press coverage, we researched NASA's official website, the space agency that started the project. We used the comprehensive details available to us on the construction, timeline, and other countries joining the project to further research for the benefit of humanity. Many countries recognized the significance of a global research laboratory, as its **revolutionary** research will affect our generation and future generations. These resources helped us understand Europe, Japan, Canada, and, later, Russia's contributions, like research modules, scientific equipment, and funding.

For our product we chose a website over other options because we had extensive coding expertise, allowing us to excel at website building compared to other students with minimal to no coding experience, also making our product stand out. After completing the initial research, we had to find a way to compress decades of **revolutionary** innovations in the aerospace industry into a website. One of our greatest challenges was creating sections that accurately conveyed the **revolutionary** impact of the ISS while remaining engaging and entertaining for readers. We selected photographs,diagrams, and video clips that directly related to the 2026 NHD theme: **Revolution**, **Reaction**, and **reform** in history.

The ISS emerged at a time when countries pushed past political and social disputes to research and to eventually build humanity-defying research projects for the betterment of society. The ISS is the product of **revolutions**:new robotics, political **reforms**, and sustainable life in space. This prompted Russia and other countries to join, leading to several political **reforms** as they came together. The research conducted on the ISS is not limited to technological advancements; many of the **reforms** were medical, with the leading advancements being: faster cancer drug formulation, understanding muscle/bone atrophy, and engineering tissue repairs. The International Space Station (ISS), has **revolutionized** the way space agencies understand, research, and explore space and continues to symbolize how political, technological and medical **reforms** can unite nations toward a shared scientific purpose. The ISS encouraged post Cold War international collaboration and continues to represent the program's **revolutions** and international goodwill.