Music.

SUNITA WILLIAMS: Hi. My name is Sunita Williams. I'm a NASA astronaut.

QUESTION: What did you enjoy about your space flight?

WILLIAMS: It was an amazing experience for me. It was a long time.

I joined the astronaut corps in 1998, so it was about eight years before I had the opportunity to go into space.

But as soon as I got, as soon as we all got there on STS-116 and we were able to just look out the window, see the space station for the first time, those gold solar panels as we were approaching it, I was beside myself with how wonderful just the view was, not to mention I had the opportunity to do a couple spacewalks while I was up there, and just having that visor between you and the outside of space was just incredible, and to look and see Northern Lights, as well as our beautiful planet out into space was just amazing. Just incredible.
QUESTION: What was life like aboard the International Space Station?

WILLIAMS: So you can fly from one end of the lab right through the Node and into the Russian segment through the PMA, and that's just a lot of fun.

There's always a constant humming of the pumps in the background and the fans in the ventilations system, so you're always hearing a little buzz. But if you want some quiet, you can go into the quiet of the Kyuta.

I think the best memory that I have from living on the ISS is the camaraderie of the crewmates up there.

Every evening, we would get together and have dinner around the table in the service module and just share stories with each other about the day.

Sometimes we'd discuss language and the idiosyncrasies of the different languages, and it was just always fun just to reflect and realize where we were.

QUESTION: Tell us about your dog Gorby and his sudden fame.

WILLIAMS: Gorby, I spent a lot of time in Russia training for this mission for the International Space Station and so of course I got to know a lot about Russia, and of course one of the distinguished people of the Russian history is Mikhail Gorbachev. I heard about, I heard about Gorby sightings. Heidi Piper was down on NEEMO underwater and they had a big Gorby magnet there, and then one of the gentlemen from the press had written me an e-mail and said, "Hey, we have Flat Gorby sightings all over the world." He was in Japan, he was in Russia, so he was all over the place, and it was really nice. It was uplifting. It made me laugh every time I got an e-mail from them.

QUESTION: How did you adjust to weightlessness?

WILLIAMS: I would say the transition to microgravity was a little bit easier. It took me just about 24 hours and then I felt like I was used to it, and then I loved it.
A little clumsy, but I got used to being able to fly around pretty quickly thereafter.

Coming back to Earth, it probably took a couple days just for the neurovestibular effects to start to wear off. Sort of went off like a light switch with me,

but it's a little bit different for everybody. But I can still feel I'm a little bit slower in running than I was before I left,

but I heard it's usually a day for day, so it will probably take me about six months to get back to where I was before I left.

QUESTION: Do you see life on Earth differently now?

WILLIAMS: Definitely see things on Earth a lot different than before I went.

When we were up there, we had the distinct pleasure of being able to look out the window and see our beautiful planet and see continents, and no borders for countries,

and I think that was a huge impression. You look down at the planet Earth and it's hard to imagine two people even arguing,

never mind fighting down there, because it all looks like one,

that we live on these wonderful continents together.
The second impression I got was looking out the side window at how thin our little atmosphere is that protects us from all the dangers of living in space, of vacuum and heat and cold, and we can't take any of that for granted.

QUESTION: Who inspired you?

WILLIAMS: Well, I think my parents were a huge inspiration to me. Both of them had came from not-so-well-to-do families and made it on their own, and both of them have a huge “can-do” spirit, and influenced me to take chances and do as well as I can.

John Young was a huge inspiration for me to even apply to the astronaut corps when my test pilot school class met him when we came to visit to Johnson Space Center.

QUESTION: With space flight behind you, what would you like to do next?

WILLIAMS: I'd love to go back to space.

I'd love to go to the space station again as the commander of the space station.

I'd love to be part of the Crew Exploration Vehicle and do whatever we need to do
for the testing of that as we get ready to go back to the moon and on to Mars.