

# Speaking and Listening Discussion

## Let's Talk About... Space

New Vocabulary Mark the stressed vowel sound in each word or phrase:

- |                    |                |                   |                    |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. alien           | 6. black hole  | 11. planet        | 16. space station  |
| 2. astronaut       | 7. exploration | 12. satellite     | 17. telescope      |
| 3. astronomy       | 8. hope        | 13. shooting star | 18. universe       |
| 4. atmosphere      | 9. meteorite   | 14. solar system  | 19. void           |
| 5. Big Bang theory | 10. Moon       | 15. spacecraft    | 20. weightlessness |

Discussion Questions Ask and answer them with a partner or small group:

1. Would you like to navigate the **universe** in a state-of-the-art **spacecraft** at 18,000 mph? Why? / Why not?
2. What are your three favourite **planets**? Why? Why do planets exist? How many planets are there?
3. Do you believe that **alien** lifeforms exist? If yes, why haven't they made contact with the human race yet? If no, why not? Would it be fun to meet an alien from another planet? What would you tell them about the people of Earth? Where would you take them and what would you show them? Do you think their technology would be more advanced than ours? Would you be happy to visit their planet in return?
4. Have you ever dreamed of being an **astronaut**? How would you look in a spacesuit? What are the difficulties involved in training to become an astronaut? Is **weightlessness** a state you aspire to? Would you like to spend time on the International **Space Station**? What would you do if one of your colleagues fell out with you and created a bad **atmosphere**, despite there being no atmosphere?
5. Have you heard of the **Big Bang theory**? What existed prior to that? How do you think the world began?
6. Have you thought about **astronomy** as a hobby? What is fascinating about the **solar system**? Would you like to own a powerful **telescope** and gaze up into the **void** at night? Why? / Why not? Do you know any constellations of stars, like the Big Dipper and the Great Bear? Could you identify a **black hole**?
7. Why do people pin their **hopes** on space travel to solve problems on Earth, like overpopulation? Would you like to live in a module on the **Moon**? How would it be different to your present home?
8. Are you optimistic that man – or woman – will walk on Mars in the near future? Why are humans restless for endless **exploration** and colonisation? Why don't we use the money from space programs to address pressing issues here on Earth, before creating further havoc in far-flung places?
9. How do you feel about the Moon landings? Are you dismayed we haven't been to the Moon since 1972?
10. Is the space program worth the money when the main benefit so far seems to be **satellite** television?
11. Do you fear that Earth could be hit and potentially destroyed by an asteroid? How would you feel?
12. Have you ever seen a **shooting star**? Describe it. Did it seem romantic in any **way**?

### English Idioms about Space

Say a new sentence with each idiom:

1. aim for the stars
2. be a waste of space
3. be down to earth
4. be in a world of your own
5. be on top of the world
6. be out of this world
7. be over the moon
8. be worlds apart
9. fly too close to the sun
10. Houston, we have a problem
11. it is not rocket science
12. many moons ago
13. men are from Mars, women are from Venus
14. once in a blue moon
15. space out
16. star-crossed lovers
17. thank your lucky stars
18. the sky's the limit
19. we have lift off!

### Discussion Situations about Space

What would you do if...?

1. You finally pass all the tests to become an astronaut, but on the day of the launch you have a verruca and can't make it.
2. You reach an alien planet which is the opposite to our own in every way. You are disappointed to find that the 'opposite' you is rich, cool, and has a Masters in Particle Physics.
3. A **meteorite** hits Earth, destroying property in your neighbourhood. Unfortunately it is your property.
4. You wake up to find you're on a rocket to Mars – one way.
5. After a great night out with friends, you are astonished to witness what looks like a UFO descending behind LIDL car park.
6. Everybody saw the incredible lunar eclipse – except you.
7. Your 'friend' has 'irrefutable' proof that the Earth is flat.
8. You are caught using your telescope to spy on the people across the road.
9. You fall in love with an astronomer. Things are out of this world, until you realise you are worlds apart.
10. During a tour of the National Space Museum, you discover a wormhole that leads to the dwarf planet Pluto.
11. You become the first person to moonwalk on the Moon.

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1. Describe the pictures. 2. Discuss them. 3. Compare them. 4. Create a quiz about them using different question types: comprehension, wh-, yes/no, true/false/unknown, etc. 5. Improvise a dialogue or story.  
Extension: Now try each exercise again without using any of the 20 keywords!

Picture A



Picture B

