



ASK A SPACE SCIENTIST

Our universe is full of mysteries, and some of the most mind-boggling are in space. Curious kids sent questions, and we asked a NASA astronaut. Have questions about space? Send them to brilliant@usbnc.org (with your name and age).

If you could move to a planet with aliens in another galaxy, would you? Or would you stay on Earth, and why? – Aava, age 16

Hi, Aava,
I have to say, Aava, it would depend. It would depend on if I can take my loved ones with me. And we say this a lot. I've heard people onboard the space station say that we would stay forever if we could bring our family and friends. And I really feel that way. I would be very excited to go somewhere new, to see new things, but it would be tough to do it without my loved ones.
– Christina



Christina Koch sends a loving gesture to family and friends as she waits to have her suit checked prior to her launch into space in 2019.

What is your favorite space food? – Anisa, age 12

Hi, Anisa,
Ooh, well, I do love space mac and cheese. I will say, that is yummy ... Can you believe we actually can eat full meals like Thai chicken? They're all dehydrated, and all we have to do is add water. – Christina

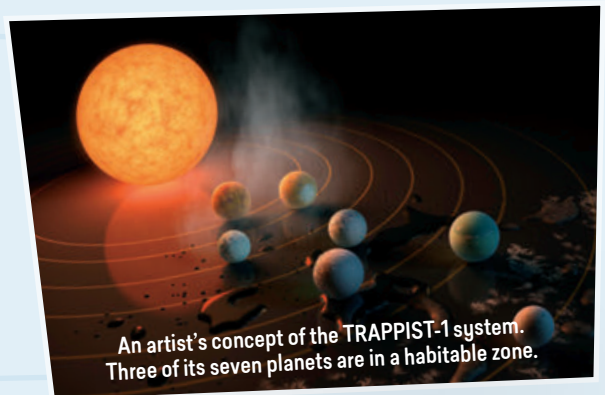


Crewmates on the International Space Station in 2019 unpack fresh fruit and other treats. From left: Jessica Meir, Andrew Morgan, Christina Koch, Luca Parmitano.

COSMIC QUIZ

The habitable zone is the area around a star where temperatures are not too hot or too cold, but are just right for liquid water (and perhaps life). It's also called the:

- A) Water zone
- B) Green zone
- C) Goldilocks zone
- D) Just right zone



An artist's concept of the TRAPPIST-1 system. Three of its seven planets are in a habitable zone.



What do you love about your job? – Rose, age 13

Hi, Rose,
Oh my goodness. I love so many things about my job. I think one of the big ones is getting to interact with people like you, Rose—with students that are inspired by space. I get to share this awesome work that we’re doing. That is a really, really cool part of my job.

Another cool part of my job is getting to work with the team, and especially with a crew, a group of close-knit people that has a shared mission. And we’re all working really hard. We’re all supporting each other. That is a really incredible feeling that I actually hadn’t experienced truly before this job, and it is absolutely awesome.

Everything else, all those experiences, looking down on Earth, getting to do a spacewalk, getting to fly—those are absolutely wonderful. They’re thrilling in the moment. But the things that [are] meaningful, that are my favorite part, those are the teamwork aspects of my job. —Christina



On the International Space Station in 2019, crew members (from left) Andrew Morgan and Christina Koch of NASA, Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency (ESA), and Jessica Meir of NASA.



CHRISTINA KOCH (pronounced “Cook”) became a NASA astronaut in 2013. She set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, with a total of 328 days in space. She also participated in the first all-female spacewalk. She is assigned to the Artemis II mission to the Moon planned for 2025.

ON THE WEB

In our Space Ace video interviews, meet two amazing astronauts at Dr. Scotti’s STEAMS Station.



LELAND MELVIN was a pro football player and a NASA astronaut. When he went to space, it changed his perspective forever.

PEGGY WHITSON was a NASA astronaut and the first female commander of the International Space Station. She broke other records, too.



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BACH IN TIME

In 1995, 12-year-old Valerie Ambrose of Connecticut won a contest to name the first Mars rover. She chose the first name of this formerly enslaved woman who fought for freedom:



This rover explored Mars in 1997.

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