



## 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](mailto:brilliant@usbnc.org) (with your name and age).

**What did you miss most from Earth when you were in space for a long time?** – Emma, age 14

Hi, Emma,  
I missed my loved ones. I missed my family, my partner, my little dog. I didn't really miss any things. I didn't miss going to a coffee shop, getting fancy things. That stuff doesn't really do it for me. But I definitely miss the people.

And I also love nature. It wasn't until the end of my 11-month mission that I realized I was missing nature. I missed the feeling of wind on my face. I missed the smell of the beach, and things like that. Things that only Earth can offer, and that we all love about our shared planet. – Christina



NASA astronaut Christina Koch works with a 3D printer on the International Space Station in 2019.

**Do astronauts play sports in space?**  
– Olivia, age 10

Hi, Olivia,  
We love to play games. Now, sometimes certain sports are tough to play, because they do rely on gravity. We might not play a whole game of tennis or ping-pong or football, but we definitely can throw those things around. And let me tell you, you can throw really, really far in microgravity. It's a lot easier. And it's also very, very fun because it can go in almost any direction.

We also can play human games like human bowling, where your friend [is] like a cannonball, and you could just throw them across the module if you want, because no one weighs anything. So we have a lot of fun in space.  
– Christina

## COSMIC QUIZ

Christina Koch and Jessica Meir took the first all-woman spacewalk in 2019. The official name for astronauts' work outside a spacecraft is:

- A) Extra Special Adventure (ESA)
- B) Extravehicular Activity (EVA)
- C) Super Space Stroll (SSS)
- D) Space Station Escape (SSE)



Christina Koch (left) and Jessica Meir in 2019



## How does your body feel in space? – Sami, age 9

Hi, Sami,  
It's really wild how the human body adapts to space. I don't know if you've ever done a headstand, but when you do, you kind of feel all the blood rushing up to your head. And that is how it felt for me when I first got to space. It felt like I was doing a headstand the entire time. And so I had to focus on my work through that feeling and try to ignore it, but it was tough. It felt that way for about a week straight.

But luckily, your body does adapt to microgravity. So after about a week, all those weird feelings kind of went away.

And then it is just so much fun. It's so much fun to float. You can jump up and be on the ceiling in two seconds. You can do flips. It's really, really fun. And sleeping in space is really cool. It feels very peaceful. So there are a lot of really cool sensations. –Christina



On the International Space Station in 2020, Christina Koch tries on her suit for the return to Earth. She says, "The most important thing that contributes to a mission's success is how well you interact with your crewmates."



**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.



Scan the QR code with a smart phone or go to: [brilliantstarmagazine.org/themes/DrScotti](https://brilliantstarmagazine.org/themes/DrScotti)

## BACH IN TIME

Mae Jemison, the first woman of color to travel in space, was one of Christina's role models. In addition to eight days of space travel, Mae:

- A) Appeared in a *Star Trek* episode
- B) Worked as a physician
- C) Heads a group aiming to send people beyond our solar system
- D) All of the above

