

# The smelly truth about life in space

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**Left behind:** Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore (above) said it was hard to watch their malfunctioning craft depart the International Space Station without them after being stranded in space for eight months.

**Will humans ever live on other planets? Two astronauts are stuck in space. But if we had to stay their forever, it might not be that fun.**

## What's happening?

"I'm finally inside the **International Space Station**," shouts the **astronaut**. [I'm removing my helmet now and... good grief! What's that fearful **pong**?"]

A bad smell is just one of the things that astronauts Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore have to cope with. They travelled to space in June, but problems on their spacecraft mean they will be in space for eight months, rather than eight days.

## Find out more

The smell is metallic. It comes from anything that has been in space, because of the **radiation** it is exposed to.

Astronauts follow a very strict daily **routine**. They get up at 6.30am **GMT** after sleeping in small pods.

Most of the day is spent on experiments or small repairs to the space station. But exercise is key, because living in zero **gravity** is bad for your bones and **muscles**. The

astronauts spend at least two hours a day on a treadmill or an exercise bike.

But they get far more sweaty than they would on Earth, because there is no gravity to pull sweat from the body. Their exercise clothes become so disgusting that they have to be thrown away quickly.

Food comes in packets. The loo is a small pod where everything that comes out is sucked away. Urine is recycled as drinking water.

## Will humans ever live on other planets?

### Some say

Yes! The main challenges are being able to grow food and create energy in space, as well as having the right **habitat** to live in. Scientists will find answers to these problems.

### Others think

No! We already have the perfect place to live: Earth! Most people would not live in a smelly box on space. And most planets are very dangerous for humans.

## Six steps to discovery

### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - Would you like to be an astronaut?

### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: How long would it take to get to Mars?

## Some people say

*"This is the goal: to make available for life every place where life is possible."*

**Hermann Oberth (1894 – 1989), German physicist**

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*What do you think?*

### 3. Investigate

**What are the facts?** - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

### 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - You are invited to live on Mars. Think about what you would say.

### 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - What is the most exciting thing about space travel? Take it in turns to say.

### 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - Imagine you win a chance to travel to the Moon. Write a diary entry about it.

## Glossary

**International Space Station** - A joint project between the US, Russia, Japan, Canada and the European Space Agency.

**Astronaut** - Someone whose job it is to go into space.

**Pong** - A bad smell or a two-dimensional table tennis arcade game. Created in 1972, it is one of the earliest video games.

**Radiation** - Energy given off when radioactive material decays. It can be extremely harmful and sometimes fatal, causing vomiting, skin damage, hair loss and cancer.

**Routine** - Something you do regularly and consistently — for example, you might go for a walk before breakfast every day.

**GMT** - Short for Greenwich Mean Time

**Gravity** - An invisible force that pulls objects towards each other. Earth's gravity keeps us on the ground and makes things fall. It is less strong on Mars.

**Muscles** - Tissues in the body that tighten and relax to help us move.

**Habitat** - An animal's habitat is the place that they live in.