

## Bigger risk of being killed by falling space rocket

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Have you ever worried about debris from a falling rocket hitting you on the head? That scenario has never been high on the list of life's worries. The chances of a piece of space junk hitting us were almost zero. However, that is

changing. Scientists say there is a growing likelihood that rocket parts falling back to Earth could hit and kill someone in the next ten years. This is because more countries are sending more rockets into space. Scientists say space is becoming congested. They are calling on nations and companies that send rockets into space to be more responsible. They want them to control the reentry of any rocket parts floating in the lower atmosphere.

Scientists in Canada did research on the number of rockets launched into space, and the risk of people being hit by falling debris. There were 133 rocket launches in 2021. That was a record. It looks like that record will be broken this year. The scientists said more than 60 per cent of rockets are abandoned in space after they release their satellites. The abandoned spacecraft can circle the earth for years before they fall back down. A key finding of the research is that rocket parts are more likely to hit somewhere (or someone) in the Global South. However, most rockets are launched from the Global North. The scientists say countries and companies are "exporting risk to the rest of the world".

Sources: [gizmodo.com](https://gizmodo.com) / [newscientist.com](https://newscientist.com) / [theverge.com](https://theverge.com)

### Writing

There are too many space rockets and too much space junk in space. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

rocket / worries / space junk / zero / Earth / the next ten years / space / atmosphere / scientists / falling debris / rocket launches / satellites / the Global South / risk

### True / False

- 1) Falling rockets are high on people's lists of worries. T / F
- 2) Space junk could kill people in the next 10 years. T / F
- 3) More countries are launching more rockets into space. T / F
- 4) Scientists want space rocket companies to be more responsible. T / F
- 5) There were record numbers of rocket launches last year. T / F
- 6) Less than half of the rockets sent into space are abandoned. T / F
- 7) The likeliest place to be hit by space junk is in the Global South. T / F
- 8) Scientists say rocket companies are importing risk to the world. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <b>worried</b>    | a. dumped           |
| 2. <b>worries</b>    | b. crowded          |
| 3. <b>likelihood</b> | c. sent up          |
| 4. <b>congested</b>  | d. probability      |
| 5. <b>control</b>    | e. waste            |
| 6. <b>launched</b>   | f. concerns         |
| 7. <b>debris</b>     | g. orbit            |
| 8. <b>abandoned</b>  | h. lost sleep over  |
| 9. <b>circle</b>     | i. sending overseas |
| 10. <b>exporting</b> | j. direct           |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about space rockets?
- b) Do you ever worry about something falling onto your head?
- c) What do you know about space junk?
- d) What are the dangers of space junk?
- e) Why are there so many rockets going into space?
- f) How can we protect ourselves from falling space junk?
- g) What problems are there if space is congested?
- h) How can companies stop their rockets from hitting people?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. worried about debris from                | a. us were almost zero          |
| 2. high on the list of                      | b. of the research              |
| 3. chances of a piece of space junk hitting | c. by falling debris            |
| 4. more countries are sending more          | d. life's worries               |
| 5. the reentry of any rocket parts floating | e. rest of the world            |
| 6. the risk of people being hit             | f. the earth for years          |
| 7. It looks like that record will be        | g. rockets into space           |
| 8. The abandoned spacecraft can circle      | h. broken this year             |
| 9. A key finding                            | i. a falling rocket hitting you |
| 10. companies are exporting risk to the     | j. in the lower atmosphere      |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of space rockets?
- Should there be a yearly limit on the rockets going into space?
- Why do most rockets fall on the poorer areas of Earth?
- Would you like to go to space in a rocket?
- What do you think of exporting risk to the Global South?
- When will we all travel using space rockets?
- What questions would you like to ask the space companies?

## Spelling

- That crnaeiso has never been high on the list
- a piece of space kjun
- there is a growing lkhiooleid
- space is becoming ongtsceed
- be more sbnrpeliseo
- floating in the lower taehoresmp
- Scientists in Canada did rcsaerh
- being hit by falling rbdesi
- rockets are oadnbaned in space
- spacecraft can rcilec the earth
- most rockets are eucladnh
- xtingoerp risk to the rest of the world

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. f	3. d	4. c	5. j
6. c	7. e	8. a	9. g	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Crossing the Road

You think crossing the road is the riskiest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as risky. Also, tell the others which is the least risky of these (and why): eating fast food, flying or crossing the road.

### Role B – Eating Fast Food

You think eating fast food is the riskiest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as risky. Also, tell the others which is the least risky of these (and why): crossing the road, flying or crossing the road.

### Role C – Flying

You think flying is the riskiest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as risky. Also, tell the others which is the least risky of these (and why): eating fast food, crossing the road or crossing the road.

### Role D – Not Exercising

You think crossing the road is the riskiest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as risky. Also, tell the others which is the least risky of these (and why): eating fast food, flying or crossing the road.

## Speaking – Risks

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest risks at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| • Falling rockets   | • Flying              |
| • Crossing the road | • Swimming in a river |
| • Eating fast food  | • Sky diving          |
| • Not exercising    | • Smoking             |

### Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 T	6 F	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.