

International Space Station gets air-filled extension

31st May, 2016



America's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has successfully inflated a new, experimental room for crew members to use in space. The

inflatable pod is now an extension to the International Space Station (ISS). It is roughly four metres long and 3.2 metres wide. It took three days to fully inflate. ISS crew members now have to wait a week before entering it. NASA engineers must first ensure it is airtight. The blow-up compartment is part of a test on the feasibility of inflatable accommodation on the Moon and Mars, and of orbiting space hotels. NASA paid \$17.8 million for the demo capsule. It hopes this initial test will lead to bigger inflatable rooms at the space station.

The inflatable is the world's first blow-up capsule for astronauts, cosmonauts and other space travellers. It is called the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module, or BEAM for short. It is named after Bigelow Aerospace, the company that designed and built it. Company founder Robert Bigelow has spent many years investing in and building hotels. He is currently working on a project to build two private space stations that could serve as hotels in the heavens by the end of the decade. He said he envisions inflatables as a big part of space travel and tourism in the future. The pods are small enough to transport as compressed, airless units, but big enough and sturdy enough to live in, once filled with air.

Sources: the-japan-news.com / gizmag.com / dw.com

Writing

Money should be spent on health and education, not space research. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

NASA / experimental / crew / members / roughly / engineers / feasibility / capsule / inflatable / astronauts / travellers / designed / investing / private / decade / sturdy

True / False

- The new inflatable room on the ISS is for the crew to use. T / F
- The room is 13.2 metres in length. T / F
- It took three hours for engineers to inflate the room. T / F
- NASA said it would not be able to build any bigger rooms. T / F
- The shortened name of the inflatable room is 'BEAM'. T / F
- A company may have hotels in space by 2020. T / F
- A company boss said inflatables would play a small part in space travel. T / F
- The inflatable pods are strong enough for people to live in them. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1. inflated | a. approximately |
| 2. extension | b. constructed |
| 3. roughly | c. flattened |
| 4. airtight | d. add-on |
| 5. initial | e. presently |
| 6. built | f. first |
| 7. currently | g. visualises |
| 8. envisions | h. blown up |
| 9. compressed | i. strong |
| 10. sturdy | j. sealed |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you know about NASA?
- What do you think about the inflatable extension?
- What could the new inflatable pod be used for?
- What do you think it's like to work on the ISS?
- Would you like to stay in an inflatable space hotel?
- Which is better – a hotel on the Moon or an orbiting hotel?
- What dangers could there be with the inflatable capsule?
- Would you be a good astronaut? Why?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. crew | a. enough to live in |
| 2. It is roughly | b. feasibility |
| 3. It took three days to fully | c. other space travellers |
| 4. engineers must first ensure | d. four metres long |
| 5. part of a test on the | e. the heavens |
| 6. The inflatable is the world's first blow- | f. on a project |
| 7. astronauts, cosmonauts and | g. members |
| 8. He is currently working | h. up capsule |
| 9. serve as hotels in | i. it is airtight |
| 10. big enough and sturdy | j. inflate |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about the ISS?
- What are the dangers of working in space?
- What do you think of space tourism?
- What other uses could there be for inflatable rooms in space?
- Would you prefer to stay in a hotel in space or on Earth? Why?
- What will space tourism look like in the future?
- What are the pros and cons of living in space?
- What questions would you like to ask the astronauts?

Spelling

- National earnsucAtoi and Space Administration (NASA)
- engineers must first ensure it is iaightrt
- a test on the bafiilesity
- ogiiitnrb space hotels
- \$17.8 million for the demo laceup
- bigger tflibaelan rooms at the space station
- astronauts, otoscunams and other space travellers
- He is tncryurel working on a project
- serve as hotels in the snvehae
- he snnsoivie inflatables as a big part
- transport as epcosredm, airless units
- rudsty enough to live in

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – The view

You think the view is the best thing about staying at a space hotel. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): weightlessness, the journey there or souvenirs.

Role B – Weightlessness

You think weightlessness is the best thing about staying at a space hotel. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): the view, the journey there or souvenirs.

Role C – The journey there

You think the journey there is the best thing about staying at a space hotel. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): weightlessness, the view or souvenirs.

Role D – Souvenirs

You think souvenirs are the best things about staying at a space hotel. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): weightlessness, the journey there or the view.

Speaking – Space hotel

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things about a space hotel at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| • the view | • no immigration |
| • weightlessness | • space souvenirs |
| • the journey there | • saying you've been to space |
| • space food | • silence |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	F	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.