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Satellite launched to map Earth's water – 19th December 2022

Level 4

A new satellite has a mission to map the world's oceans, lakes and rivers. It is called SWOT - Surface Water and Ocean Topography. Data from the satellite will help scientists monitor how climate change is affecting water levels. A journalist said: "SWOT is needed more than ever, as climate change worsens droughts, flooding and coastal erosion." NASA said SWOT was of "pivotal" importance. It said it would change how we see Earth's water.

The car-sized satellite took 20 years to make and cost \$1.2 billion. High-precision radar will measure the water on 90 per cent of Earth's surface. It will survey 2.1 million kilometres of rivers. It will find areas of water loss that could threaten populations and coastlines. NASA said: "SWOT will give us a ten-fold improvement in the [accuracy] of our measurements of water height." Scientists will understand more about the role oceans play in climate change.

Level 5

A satellite has been launched with a mission to map the world's oceans, lakes, rivers and other waterways. It has been dubbed SWOT - Surface Water and Ocean Topography. It went into space just before dawn. Data from the satellite will help scientists to monitor how climate change is adversely affecting water levels. The broadcaster PBS said: "SWOT is needed more than ever, as climate change worsens droughts, flooding and coastal erosion." NASA said SWOT was of "pivotal" importance. It said: "We're going to see Earth's water like we've never seen it before."

The satellite is the size of a sports utility vehicle. It took 20 years to make and cost \$1.2 billion. High-precision radar will measure the height of water on 90 per cent of Earth's surface. It will survey millions of lakes and 2.1 million kilometres of rivers. It will identify areas of water loss that could threaten populations and coastlines. A NASA spokesperson said: "SWOT will give us a ten-fold improvement in the [accuracy] and spatial resolution of our measurements of water height." It will help scientists to understand, "the critical role the oceans play in climate change".

Level 6

A U.S.-French satellite has been launched with a mission to map all the world's oceans, lakes, reservoirs, rivers and other waterways. The satellite has been dubbed SWOT - Surface Water and Ocean Topography. It went into space just before dawn on Friday. Scientists hope data from the satellite will help them to monitor how climate change is adversely changing water levels. The U.S. broadcaster PBS said: "The satellite is needed more than ever, as climate change worsens droughts, flooding and coastal erosion." A NASA spokesperson spoke of the mission's importance. She said: "It's a pivotal moment....We're going to see Earth's water like we've never seen it before."

The SWOT satellite is about the size of an SUV (sports utility vehicle). It took 20 years to develop, at a cost of \$1.2 billion. High-precision radar equipment will measure the height of water on more than 90 per cent of Earth's surface. It will survey millions of lakes, as well as 2.1 million kilometres of rivers. Scientists will identify potential areas of water loss that could threaten local populations and coastlines. NASA said SWOT is a marked technological upgrade from its predecessors. A spokesperson said: "SWOT will give us a ten-fold improvement in the [accuracy] and spatial resolution of our measurements of water height." It will help scientists to better understand, "the critical role the oceans play in climate change".