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## **Actor's ashes to be scattered in space**

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**22 July, 2005**

## THE ARTICLE

### **Actor's ashes to be scattered in space**

**BNE:** The ashes of actor James Doohan, star of the cult, 1960s U.S. sci-fi saga *Star Trek*, are to be sent into space, at his request. Mr. Doohan died on July 20 of pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease at his home in Washington. His last wish, according to his agent, was for his remains to be scattered in space. Doohan, who was 85, played the engineer Scotty in the three *Star Trek* series and seven Hollywood movies. Being space bound in his death is a fitting finale for the actor who remained synonymous with space travel throughout his 40-year career. While he will forever remain in the stratosphere, he leaves on Earth nine children from his three marriages, the youngest of whom is five.

The ashes are to be carried into space by a Texas based company called Space Services Inc. A company spokesperson said they could be on a rocket that will be launched from a California air force base in September. They will be joined by the ashes of *Star Trek* writer John Meredyth Lucas, who died in 2002. The creator of *Star Trek*, Gene Roddenberry, also had his ashes put into orbit in 1997. Space Services Inc. specializes in space memorials for those who physically want to leave Earth forever. Doohan's ashes will be sealed in an airtight aluminum capsule, which will burn up when it re-enters Earth's atmosphere.

## WARM-UPS

**1. ASHES TO ASHES:** Have you ever thought about your final resting place? Do you think you would prefer to be cremated or buried? What do you think about having your ashes scattered in the following places?

- Space
- A river or ocean
- Mount Everest
- Your garden
- The playing field of your favorite soccer / baseball team
- Into the sky from an airplane above your country
- Nowhere. I want my ashes kept in one place
- Other

**2. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think having your ashes scattered in space is best. Students B think having a traditional cremation or burial on Earth is best. Change partners often.

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Ashes / cult TV series / 'Star Trek' / space / scattered remains / space travel / rockets / memorials / orbit / Earth's atmosphere*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. ASHES:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with ashes. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. LAST WISHES:** In pairs / groups, talk about the following last wishes from different people around the world:

- a. I also want my ashes scattered in space but I can't afford it. (Jonah, Kenya)
- b. I want my children to eat some of my ashes. (Yuko, Japan)
- c. I want to be buried, not cremated, but Japan doesn't allow burials. (Kazu, Japan)
- d. To be left to float in the holy Ganges River is the best end. (Sanjay, India)
- e. I want to be placed next to the rest of my family in peace forever. (Kim, USA)
- f. Who cares? When you're dead, you're dead. (Lindsay, England)
- g. The ocean is best. You'll spread around the world. (Enrique, Brazil)
- h. I want my ashes to stay at home on the family altar (Wong, China)
- i. I want my body to be frozen. In future they can bring me back to life. (Monika, Poland)
- j. I think it's better for my family to decide after I die. (Miriam, Yemen)
- k. Scientific research. Let doctors take what they want. (Ingmar, Finland)

Change partners and compare your opinions.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |                                                                   |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. An actor is going to have his ashes scattered in space.        | T / F |
| b. His wife decided to send her husband's remains space bound.    | T / F |
| c. The actor spent 40 years acting as a space traveler.           | T / F |
| d. The actor leaves nine children on Earth.                       | T / F |
| e. The ashes will be taken into space on a Space Shuttle mission. | T / F |
| f. The ashes will be joined by those of a science fiction writer. | T / F |
| g. There is a company that specializes in space memorials.        | T / F |
| h. The ashes will orbit the Earth forever.                        | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| a. ashes        | passed away |
| b. saga         | identified  |
| c. fitting      | forsake     |
| d. synonymous   | transported |
| e. stratosphere | chronicle   |
| f. carried      | originator  |
| g. died         | remains     |
| h. creator      | incinerate  |
| i. leave        | heavens     |
| j. burn up      | apt         |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. cult                 | with space travel               |
| b. his remains to be    | it re-enters Earth's atmosphere |
| c. a fitting            | to be carried into space        |
| d. remained synonymous  | scattered in space              |
| e. he will forever      | be launched                     |
| f. The ashes are        | 1960s U.S. sci-fi saga          |
| g. a rocket that will   | airtight aluminum capsule       |
| h. ...had his ashes put | remain in the stratosphere      |
| i. sealed in an         | into orbit                      |
| j. burn up when         | finale                          |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**WORD ORDER:** Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

### Actor's ashes to be scattered in space

**BNE:** The ashes of actor James Doohan, star of the cult, saga U.S. sci-fi 1960s *Star Trek*, are to be sent into space, at his request. Mr. Doohan died on July 20 of pneumonia and Alzheimer's disease at his home in Washington. His last wish, according to his agent, was for scattered remains to be his in space. Doohan, who was 85, played the engineer Scotty in the three *Star Trek* series and seven Hollywood movies. Being space bound in his death is for finale a fitting the actor who travel synonymous with remained space throughout his 40-year career. While he will forever remain in the stratosphere, he leaves on Earth from three children his nine marriages, the youngest of whom is five.

The ashes are to be carried into Texas space by a based company called Space Services Inc. A company spokesperson said they could be on a rocket that will be launched from a California air force base in September. They will be the joined ashes by of *Star Trek* writer John Meredyth Lucas, who died in 2002. The creator of *Star Trek*, Gene Roddenberry, also had orbit put into his ashes in 1997. Space Services Inc. in memorials space specializes for those who physically want to leave Earth forever. Doohan's ashes will be sealed in an airtight aluminum capsule, up when burn which will it re-enters Earth's atmosphere.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**last**' and '**wish**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WORD ORDER:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers.

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "LAST WISHES" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about death and your last wishes.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| • cult       | • based      |
| • request    | • rocket     |
| • agent      | • joined     |
| • bound      | • orbit      |
| • synonymous | • physically |
| • Earth      | • burn       |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think of people's ashes being scattered in space?
- d. What would you like to happen to your body after you die?
- e. Have you ever thought about your final resting place?
- f. Would you prefer to be buried or cremated?
- g. Do you have a last wish?
- h. Have you ever seen *Star Trek*?
- i. Do you like science fiction books and movies?
- j. Are you interested in space travel?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Don't you think cremation is bad for the atmosphere?
- d. How would you like to be remembered?
- e. What would be a fitting memorial for you?
- f. Do you do anything to remember the deceased members of your family?
- g. Do you think there should be a law against scattering ashes in public places?
- h. Would you like your dead body to be frozen in the hope that scientists could bring you back to life in the future?
- i. Would you like your body to be used in medical research?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

**BEFORE I GO:** Talk to your partner(s) about the things you would like to do before you leave the Earth. Finish this sentence starter:

Before I go I'd like to...

- a. visit \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. thank \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. meet \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. eat \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. tell \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. give \_\_\_\_\_.
- g. see \_\_\_\_\_.
- h. witness \_\_\_\_\_.
- i. know \_\_\_\_\_.
- j. make sure \_\_\_\_\_.
- k. (other) \_\_\_\_\_.

Change partners and share what you heard from your earlier partner(s).



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Actor's ashes to be scattered in space

**BNE:** The ashes of actor James Doohan, star \_\_ \_\_ \_\_\_\_, 1960s U.S. sci-fi saga *Star Trek*, are to be sent into space, at his \_\_\_\_\_. Mr. Doohan died on July 20 of \_\_\_\_\_ and Alzheimer's disease at his home in Washington. His last wish, according to his agent, was for his remains to be scattered in space. Doohan, who was 85, \_\_\_\_\_ Scotty in the three *Star Trek* series and seven Hollywood movies. Being \_\_\_\_\_ in his death is a fitting finale for the actor who remained \_\_\_\_\_ with space travel throughout his 40-year career. While he will forever remain in the \_\_\_\_\_, he leaves on Earth nine children from his three marriages, the youngest of whom is five.

The ashes are to be carried into space by a Texas \_\_\_\_\_ company called Space Services Inc. A company spokesperson said they could be on a rocket that will \_\_\_\_\_ from a California air force base in September. They will be joined by the ashes of *Star Trek* \_\_\_\_\_ John Meredyth Lucas, who died in 2002. The creator of *Star Trek*, Gene Roddenberry, also had his ashes \_\_\_\_\_ in 1997. Space Services Inc. specializes in space \_\_\_\_\_ for those who physically want to leave Earth forever. Doohan's ashes will be \_\_\_\_\_ in an \_\_\_\_\_ aluminum capsule, which will burn up when it \_\_\_\_\_ Earth's atmosphere.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on Star Trek. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. ASHES POLICY:** Make some recommendations to your government on the desirability of people scattering their ashes in public places. Show your recommendations to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all think about similar things?

**4. LAST WISHES:** Write a letter outlining your last wishes. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all have similar last wishes?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. T      b. F      c. T      d. T      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. ashes	passed away
b. saga	identified
c. fitting	forsake
d. synonymous	transported
e. stratosphere	chronicle
f. carried	originator
g. died	remains
h. creator	incinerate
i. leave	heavens
j. burn up	apt

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. cult	with space travel
b. his remains to be	it re-enters Earth's atmosphere
c. a fitting	to be carried into space
d. remained synonymous	scattered in space
e. he will forever	be launched
f. The ashes are	1960s U.S. sci-fi saga
g. a rocket that will	airtight aluminum capsule
h. ...had his ashes put	remain in the stratosphere
i. sealed in an	into orbit
j. burn up when	finale

### WORD ORDER:

#### Actor's ashes to be scattered in space

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