

## Record number of people in space

16th September 2024



It's becoming a little crowded in space. There is now a record number of 19 people up in the heavens. The record was broken after the three-person crew on board a Russian Soyuz capsule docked at the International Space Station (ISS). On the recent mission

were NASA astronaut Don Pettit and Russian cosmonauts Alexey Ovchinin and Ivan Vagner. They brought the number of residents on the ISS to 12. Chinese astronauts are also part of the record. They have three "taikonauts" working on the Tiangong Space Station. The remaining four space travellers are part of SpaceX's Polaris Dawn mission. That project saw a historic first ever civilian spacewalk last Thursday.

There is a point of contention regarding the recent record. That is over the definition of where outer space starts. NASA and the U.S. military regard the boundary separating Earth's atmosphere and outer space as being 80 km above sea level. With this interpretation, the record for humans in space is 20, set in May 2023 and tied in January of this year. However, the conventional definition of the edge of space is called the Karman Line. The International Aeronautical Federation puts this line at an altitude of 100 km above sea level. The new record uses this definition. The Karman Line is used for legal purposes to differentiate between what constitutes an aircraft and a spacecraft.

Sources: [mashable.com](https://mashable.com) / [space.com](https://space.com) / [iflscience.com](https://iflscience.com)

### Writing

The space race is a good thing. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

crowded / space / record / the heavens / capsule / astronaut / mission / spacewalk / contention / definition / military / atmosphere / sea level / altitude / spacecraft

### True / False

- 1) The article says space is becoming overcrowded. T / F
- 2) Four cosmonauts joined a Russian Soyuz capsule. T / F
- 3) There are now 13 people living on the ISS. T / F
- 4) The first ever civilian spacewalk took place last week. T / F
- 5) Everyone agrees on where the boundary between Earth and space is. T / F
- 6) NASA believes outer space begins 80 km above sea level. T / F
- 7) Twenty people were in space in 2023 according to NASA. T / F
- 8) An altitude line shows the difference between aircraft and spacecraft. T / F

### Synonym Match

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

- |                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <b>crowded</b>        | a. private citizen |
| 2. <b>the heavens</b>    | b. congested       |
| 3. <b>docked</b>         | c. explanation     |
| 4. <b>mission</b>        | d. consider        |
| 5. <b>civilian</b>       | e. berthed         |
| 6. <b>contention</b>     | f. distinguish     |
| 7. <b>regard</b>         | g. space           |
| 8. <b>interpretation</b> | h. height          |
| 9. <b>altitude</b>       | i. journey         |
| 10. <b>differentiate</b> | j. disagreement    |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What are the benefits to us of people going into space?
- c) What would it be like to look at Earth from space?
- d) What will journeys to space be like in 100 years from now?
- e) What do you think of the possibility of space wars?
- f) What would living on Mars be like?
- g) Is there life on other planets?
- h) What questions would you like to ask those in space?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. It's becoming a little                     | a. four space travellers  |
| 2. the three-person crew on                   | b. outer space starts     |
| 3. a Russian Soyuz capsule docked             | c. civilian spacewalk     |
| 4. The remaining                              | d. of the edge of space   |
| 5. a historic first ever                      | e. board                  |
| 6. There is a point                           | f. 100 km above sea level |
| 7. the definition of where                    | g. of contention          |
| 8. the boundary separating Earth's atmosphere | h. crowded in space       |
| 9. the conventional definition                | i. and outer space        |
| 10. at an altitude of                         | j. at the ISS             |

## Discussion – Student B

- Would you like to go up into space?
- Why do people want to go into space?
- What do you think of day trips to space?
- What would life be like on the International Space Station?
- What's the difference between an astronaut and a cosmonaut?
- Should Russia, the USA and China collaborate more in space?
- What do you know about the space race?
- What would it be like to do a spacewalk?

## Spelling

- on board a Russian Soyuz eluapcs
- Russian scsuomaotn
- the number of sedenistr on the ISS
- The irnimeagn four space travellers
- part of SpaceX's Polaris Dawn oiismsn
- a historic first ever civnilia spacewalk
- There is a point of innteootcn
- the ubradyon separating Earth's atmosphere
- With this atiienrperttno
- vnetonaolcni definition of the edge of space
- at an ltudeiat of 100 km above sea level
- what titsntcuose an aircraft and a spacecraft

### Answers – Synonym Match

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

## Role Play

### Role A – Space

You think space is the worst place to be crowded. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't so bad when crowded. Also, tell the others which is the least worst of these to be crowded (and why): a beach, a cable car or an English class.

### Role B – A Beach

You think a beach is the worst place to be crowded. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't so bad when crowded. Also, tell the others which is the least worst of these to be crowded (and why): space, a cable car or an English class.

### Role C – A Cable Car

You think a cable car is the worst place to be crowded. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't so bad when crowded. Also, tell the others which is the least worst of these to be crowded (and why): a beach, space or an English class.

### Role D – An English Class

You think an English class is the worst place to be crowded. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their places aren't so bad when crowded. Also, tell the others which is the least worst of these to be crowded (and why): a beach, a cable car or space.

## Speaking – Crowded places

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst places to be crowded at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| • Space       | • A swimming pool  |
| • A train     | • A shopping mall  |
| • A cable car | • A beach          |
| • A concert   | • An English class |

### Answers – True False

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