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**Scientists find possible alien life in outer space – 21st April 2025**

## Level 4

Scientists are closer to knowing if we are alone. For centuries, they have looked into space for signs of alien life. Now, astronomers say they have detected two chemicals that provide the conditions for life. One scientist said the chemicals represent the potential fingerprints of life. On Earth, these chemicals are only produced by microorganisms. The chemicals are "the most promising signs yet" of life.

The chemicals were found on a planet called K2-18b. This is about 124 light years from Earth. A scientist believes the planet might be a Hycean planet. This is a planet covered in water. The scientist said a Hycean world has an ocean "that is teeming with life". He said the data from K2-18b "fits" that kind of world. However, he was only 99.7% sure of that. He said he needed to be 99.99994% certain to be sure that we are not alone.

## Level 5

Scientists are closer to answering the question "Are we alone?" For centuries, astronomers have observed the heavens for signs of extraterrestrial life. Now, a team of astronomers say they have detected two chemicals that provide the conditions for life. An astrophysicist from the University of Cambridge announced the existence of two chemicals called DMS and DMDS. These represent the potential fingerprints of life. On Earth, the chemicals are only produced by microorganisms. DMS and DMDS are "the most promising signs yet" of life.

The two chemicals were discovered on a planet called K2-18b. This is about 124 light years from Earth. The astrophysicist believes the planet might be a Hycean world. This is a potentially habitable planet covered in liquid water. He said a Hycean world is one with an ocean "that is teeming with life". He said the data from K2-18b "best fits" that kind of world. However, he stopped short of stating that life exists on the planet. He was only 99.7% sure. He said he needed to be 99.99994% certain to state as fact that we are not alone.

## Level 6

Scientists are a step closer to providing an affirmative answer to the question "Are we alone?" For centuries, astronomers have been observing the heavens for signs of extraterrestrial life. Earlier this week, a team of astronomers announced they had detected a chemical that provides the conditions for life forms. Astrophysicist Dr Nikku Madhusudhan from the University of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy announced the existence of two chemicals called DMS and DMDS. These are "biosignatures" - the potential fingerprints of life. On Earth, these are only produced by microorganisms, such as plankton. The astronomers said the chemicals are "the most promising signs yet" of life.

The two biosignatures were discovered on a planet called K2-18b. This is about 124 light years from Earth. One light year is approximately 9.46 trillion km. Dr Madhusudhan speculated that the planet is a Hycean world. This is a potentially habitable planet covered in liquid water with an abundance of hydrogen. He said: "Given everything we know about [the planet K2-18b], a Hycean world with an ocean that is teeming with life is the scenario that best fits the data we have." However, he stopped short of stating that life exists on the planet. He said he was 99.7% sure that his findings did not occur by chance, but needed to be 99.99994% certain to state as fact that we are not alone.