
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Take Away English 随身英语

Space junk

太空垃圾



词汇: *space* 太空

Many of us ponder what lies in **outer space**. When we look up at the night sky, we see stars, the **twinkle** of a moving **satellite** and occasionally a distant planet. But one thing we don't see is the millions of pieces of **junk** filling up space. It's this **debris** that's causing problems for the existing technology that's up there and which we rely on.

The amount of space junk is increasing. Over the last few decades, satellites and **rockets** have been **launched** into space, **littering the cosmos** as they go. It's estimated there are now millions of discarded pieces of metal and other materials in **orbit** – everything from old rocket **segments** to accidentally dropped **astronaut** tools, and even flecks of paint. The fear is that if we don't start taking this litter out of the sky soon, it will become a significant threat to active satellites. Nobu Okada, Chief Executive of Astroscale – a company working on ways to clean up space junk – says hitting “even a small paint fleck... has enough power to blow up other satellites.”

Several ideas are being looked at to capture the debris **floating** around in space. In 2018, the RemoveDebris **spacecraft** carried out various experiments, including testing a net that could **snare** a satellite and firing a harpoon at a target in orbit to try to catch it.

This year the UK Space Agency is helping to fund new approaches to tracking satellites and debris in space. Jacob Geer from UKSA told the BBC: “**Space surveillance and tracking** is one of the key things we can do to keep safe those satellites we rely on now, and to make sure certain orbits don't become inaccessible for future generations because there's too much debris in them.”

It's clear that a solution is needed so a **celestial deep clean** can take place. But looking to the future, like any litter problem, we need to look at ways of creating less – and that shouldn't be the stuff of **science fiction**.

词汇表

outer space	外层空间, 太空
twinkle	闪烁, 闪耀
satellite	人造卫星
junk	废弃的旧东西, 垃圾
debris	碎片, 残片
rocket	火箭
launch	发射
litter	丢弃垃圾
the cosmos	宇宙
orbit	(天体围绕行星或恒星运行的) 轨道
segment	(事物的) 部分, 段
astronaut	宇航员
float	漂浮
spacecraft	宇宙飞船
snare	用罗网捕捉
space surveillance and tracking	宇宙空间监视跟踪系统
celestial	天空的, 天外的
deep clean	深层清洁
science fiction	科幻小说, 科幻电影

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Give an example of something listed in the article that is space junk.
2. What is happening to the amount of junk in space?
3. Why might space junk be a problem for satellites currently operating in space?
4. According to Jacob Geer, why might too much space junk affect future generations?
5. True or false? *Ideas to collect junk in space are only seen in science fiction movies.*

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. After the lorry crashed on the motorway, the police had to clear up all the _____ before they could re-open the road.

segments	debris	flecks	snare
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2. The government has _____ a new campaign to get people to eat more vegetables.

launching	launches	launched	launch
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3. We got up very early so we could _____ the sunrise on our cameras.

snare	surveillance	capture	orbit
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4. The house needed _____ after heavy rain led to the downstairs rooms being flooded.

deep clean	deep cleaning	deep cleaned	clean deep
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5. The night sky was so clear in the desert, we could look up and watch the _____ stars.

twinkle	celestial	twinkling	satellite
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Give an example of something listed in the article that is space junk.

Old rocket segments, accidentally dropped astronaut tools, even flecks of paint.

2. What is happening to the amount of junk in space?

The amount of space junk is increasing.

3. Why might space junk be a problem for satellites currently operating in space?

A satellite might collide with the junk and blow up.

4. According to Jacob Geer, why might too much space junk affect future generations?

Too much space junk would make space/orbit inaccessible for future generations.

5. True or false? *Ideas to collect junk in space are only seen in science fiction movies.*

False. Ideas to collect junk in space are already being tried so it is not science fiction.

2. 选择意思恰当的单词或词组来完成下列句子。

1. After the lorry crashed on the motorway, the police had to clear up all the **debris** before they could reopen the road.

2. The government has **launched** a new campaign to get people to eat more vegetables.

3. We got up very early so we could **capture** the sunrise on our cameras.

4. The house needed **deep cleaning** after heavy rain led to the downstairs rooms being flooded.

5. The night sky was so clear in the desert, we could look up and watch the **twinkling** stars.