



# EXTRATERRESTRIAL LIFE

***“If aliens ever visit us, I think the outcome would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which didn't turn out very well for the Native Americans.”***

Stephen Hawking (1942 – 2018), British theoretical physicist

## 1. Extraterrestrial Life Discussion

1. What is life? What is intelligent life? How did life start on our planet?
2. Do you think there could be intelligent life somewhere else in the Universe?
3. If aliens exist, why haven't they already made contact? Do you think we will ever make contact with aliens? Why or why not?
4. What are your favourite films or TV shows featuring aliens? What happens in them?
5. If humans found a planet with life on it, should we leave it alone or go and investigate?
6. What problems could an advanced extraterrestrial civilisation help us with?
7. If you had the chance to speak with an alien, what would you want it to know about our planet? Where would you recommend it visit to learn about our culture, history and achievements? What questions would you ask it?
8. What would aliens think of our planet if they visited today? What would they tell their friends back home about us?

## 2. Extraterrestrial Life Vocabulary

- **alien abduction** (noun), **abducted by aliens** (verb, passive) – *when aliens forcibly take humans away, usually to conduct experiments on them.*
- **UFO (unidentified flying object)** (noun) – *an object flying in the sky that cannot be identified, often assumed to be an alien spaceship.*
- **crop circle** (noun) – *impressions in fields supposedly left by an alien spaceship.*
- **SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence)** (noun) – *research projects searching for signals from distant solar systems that could indicate intelligent life.*
- **Martian** (noun, adjective) – *relating to Mars; an inhabitant of Mars.*
- **humanoid** (adjective) – *taking a general human shape (two legs, two arms and a head), but not human.*

**Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun)**

1. Breakthrough Listen is a \_\_\_\_\_ project which aims to discover signs of intelligent life using advanced radio wave telescopes.
2. In the past, people believed that \_\_\_\_\_ would launch an attack on Earth from the Red Planet.
3. In 1947, it is believed that a \_\_\_\_\_ crashed in Roswell, New Mexico.
4. It is beyond comprehension why an alien civilisation would develop technology sufficiently advanced to travel light years across the galaxy, only to use that technology to annoy farmers by creating \_\_\_\_\_ in their fields.
5. Even though Wallace appeared very convinced that he had been \_\_\_\_\_, he had also spent that same evening in the local bar drinking a considerable amount of whiskey.
6. The classic description of an alien is essentially \_\_\_\_\_, but depending on the particular environment of their home planet and the force of gravity, they could take many other forms.

### Extraterrestrial Life vocabulary comprehension questions

1. Do you believe that people might have been abducted by aliens? Why would aliens abduct people?
2. What would you do if you saw a UFO?
3. How do you explain crop circles?
4. Is SETI a waste of time and money?
5. Will humans ever become Martians?
6. Do you think aliens would be humanoid or would they take another form?

### 3. Video: Where Are All The Aliens?

You are going to watch a video by Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell called “The Fermi Paradox — Where Are All The Aliens?”

**Watch the video here:** <https://youenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-extraterrestrial-life/>

**While you watch the video, answer the following questions:**

#### Multiple choice

1. What should the Universe be full of?  
*a) little green men      b) spaceships      c) radio signals*
2. Why won't we ever know about alien life outside our local group of galaxies?  
*a) aliens don't exist      b) they are all hidden      c) the Universe expands too quickly*
3. What proportion of sun-like stars are estimated to have a planet in its habitable zone?  
*a) 20%      b) 25%      c) 33%*
4. After how many years did habitable planets form in the Milky Way?  
*a) 1 to 2 billion      b) 4 billion      c) 13 billion*

#### Sentence completion

5. A Type I civilisation is able to access all the energy on its \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A Type II civilisation is able to access all the energy from its \_\_\_\_\_.
7. A Type III civilisation is able to access all the energy from its \_\_\_\_\_.
8. With generational spaceships that could sustain a population for 1,000 years, it would take approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years for a civilisation to colonise a galaxy.

#### Short answer

9. What finds it hard to overcome a filter?
10. The conditions required for creating life might be what?
11. What might be destroyed if advanced future technology is activated?
12. How does the Universe appear due to the lack of evidence for extraterrestrial life?

## 4. Extraterrestrial Life Conversation Questions

1. Why would aliens ever visit our planet? What reasons might they have?
2. Do you believe that governments know about the existence of aliens but cover it up?
3. If aliens did make contact with us, which country or government would they make contact with?
4. If aliens visited the Earth, do you think they would be friendly or unfriendly? Would they consider us as equals or simply as inferior lifeforms? Would they consider us "intelligent"? Do you think they would share our moral values? (if they did, would that be a good thing or a bad thing?)
5. Could aliens have chosen *not* to make contact with us? Why would they do that?
6. Could human civilisation have been created by aliens? What evidence is there to suggest this?
7. Could germs taken into space by humans eventually develop into an alien civilisation?
8. Why would the discovery of life, even microbes, on other planets in our solar system signal that our species could be doomed?

## 5. Extraterrestrial Life Writing Task

Write a guide for an alien visiting Earth. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Which important people the alien should meet.
- What interesting or important places the alien should visit.
- What the alien should understand about human culture.

### **Alternative exam practice question:**

Some people believe that contact with an alien civilisation would be the greatest event in human history. Others, however, think it would be disastrous. Discuss both of these views and decide which side you agree with.