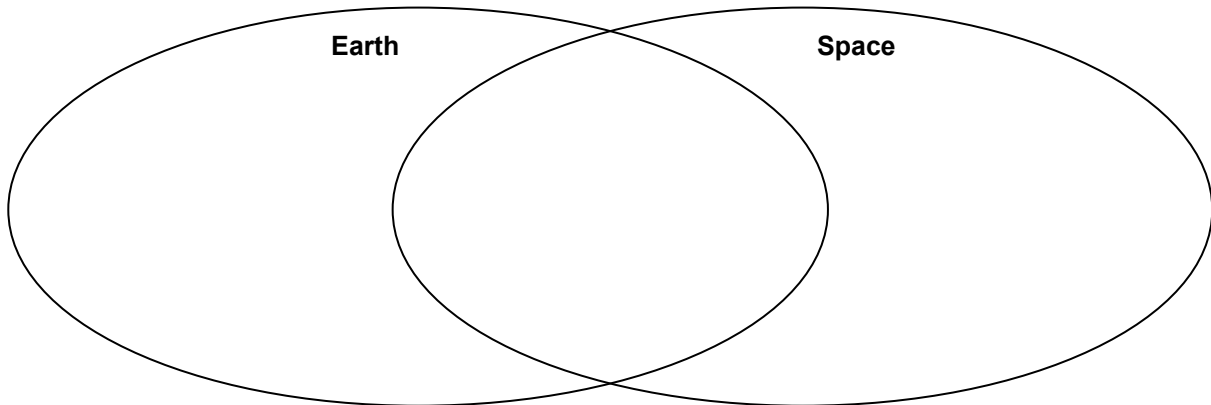


'A big responsibility': astronaut from UAE on longest ever Arab space mission

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

- a. Compare and contrast life on Earth and in space. Complete the Venn diagram. Then, discuss it with a classmate.



2 Key words

- a. Write the correct words from the wordpool to match the definitions below. Then, find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

abnormal	altitude	celestial	countless	inspiration	legacy
microgravity	mission	perspective	pioneering	refreshing	resistance
spin	stereotype	surreal	venture		

1. too many to be counted _____
2. using ideas and methods that have never been used before _____
3. the condition in which people or objects seem to be weightless; its effects can be seen when astronauts and objects float in space _____
4. go somewhere even though you know that it might be dangerous, difficult, or unpleasant _____
5. of the sky or heaven _____
6. turn around and around quickly or make something do this _____
7. the height above sea level _____
8. different from what is usual or expected, especially in a way that is harmful or not wanted _____
9. dislike of or opposition to a plan, an idea, etc. _____

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Level 3: Advanced

10. the process that takes place when somebody sees or hears something that gives them exciting new ideas or makes them want to create something, especially in art, music or literature

11. pleasantly new or different _____
12. the way you think about something _____
13. an idea or image of what a particular type of person or thing is like but which is often not true in reality and may cause hurt and offence _____
14. an important official job that a person or group of people is given to do

15. a situation that exists now because of events or actions that happened in the past

16. something so strange that you cannot believe it is real _____

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. Everyone has a different _____ on the problem, so there are many ideas about how to solve it.
2. If you change the amount of weight on a machine at the gym, you will change the amount of _____ it provides.
3. The CEO's _____ of people-first policies remained even after she retired.
4. Because of the _____ test results, his doctor asked for a follow-up appointment.
5. In the interview, the artists said that their biggest _____ was being in nature.
6. After being in the city all week, it is very _____ to take a trip to the countryside.
7. Did you know that the Earth _____ about 1,000 miles per hour?
8. _____ sometimes ignore the things that make each person unique.
9. There are _____ ways to show someone you care about them.
10. At a high _____, the same amount of air has less oxygen.

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Level 3: Advanced

Sultan al-Neyadi has taken images of Middle East and Gulf from ISS while on six-month record-breaking mission

Oliver Holmes

1 September, 2023

- 1 The songs of the late Egyptian icon Umm Kulthum have been played countless times in taxis and coffee shops across the Arab world. Now, thanks to the musical tastes of a pioneering Emirati astronaut, they have found their way to the clean white halls of the International Space Station.
- 2 Sultan al-Neyadi, who is set to make history after completing the longest ever Arab space mission, has told the *Guardian* from orbit that he felt a responsibility during the mission to bring a taste of Arab culture to space.
- 3 "Everybody is watching us; everybody is excited about space," Neyadi said in a recorded video message while floating in microgravity. "I heard a lot of my colleagues say: 'It's really nice to hear a different language on the station.'"
- 4 More than half of the several hundred people who have ventured into space have been Americans, with celestial travel dominated for decades by NASA-trained astronauts or Russian cosmonauts. So far, there have been only six visitors to space who are Arabs, now known as "najmanauts" based on the Arabic word for star, "najm".
- 5 As well as vital scientific experiments, Neyadi has made use of his six-month trip to the ISS, which spins around the globe at a speed of about 17,500 mph (28,000 km/h) and an altitude of roughly 250 miles (400km), to bring the wonders of space to the Arab world.
- 6 The 42-year-old flight engineer has posted regular video updates in Arabic on social media about life in the space station, explaining his abnormal daily life, from eating vacuum-packed space food to keeping fit in a "weightless" environment by using a weight-lifting device that creates its own resistance.
- 7 Asked if he felt pressure, as one of a handful of najmanauts, to get people in the Middle East and North Africa engaged in space exploration and science, Neyadi told the *Guardian* there is a huge audience in the Arab world "thirsty to learn more about space".
- 8 "It's our responsibility to deliver the knowledge and deliver these findings to them in an easy and interesting way," he said. "Especially the youngsters ... I would love to be a source of information, a source of inspiration for them. So it's really a big responsibility."
- 9 At the same time, Neyadi has provided a refreshing perspective for the global space-watching community, taking photographs of Middle Eastern cities and famed locations that celebrate a region often negatively stereotyped in the West.
- 10 "Here is the beautiful and historical city of Baghdad, the cornerstone of the golden age of knowledge," Neyadi wrote in a tweet early in his mission. "Scholars from this great city sparked the flames of discovery, setting the course for modern science. Their legacy reminds us to keep reaching for the stars."
- 11 In another image of the Lebanese capital, he described Beirut as "the city that breathes art, culture and beauty", while the Suez Canal was the "heart of global trade that has brought continents closer for over 150 years".
- 12 His images have created a lot of online excitement and are taken using a camera in the space station's "cupola", a small module with six side windows looking out on Earth. "A lot of people were responding, and they were happy, and they were really excited to see their place being tweeted from space. And many people wanted their hometowns or countries to be shown from space. So it's amazing to engage an audience in space activity."
- 13 During his long trip, Neyadi filmed himself celebrating the Muslim Eid al-Fitr festival in space, playing Qur'anic prayers, and wearing a white Emirati kandura, a traditional long piece of clothing. In another video, he floats through the station to the sound of Umm Kulthum's voice in the background.

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- 14 "This place is called the *International Space Station*," he told the *Guardian*, emphasising the word "international". "We have a large audience that needs to understand from both sides – an Arab astronaut living and working aboard the station, and then they learn about the culture that we are from and the region."
- 15 The najmanaut, who studied at the University of Brighton and went on to join the UAE Armed Forces, has broken several records while in space, including becoming the first Arab to perform a spacewalk, which lasted for seven hours – although he says he "really didn't feel" the time pass at all.
- 16 And in May, two Saudi najmanauts, Rayyanah Barnawi – the first Arab woman in space – and Ali al-Qarni, joined Neyadi for an eight-day mission. It was the first time three Arabs were in space together at the same time.
- 17 Neyadi said the arrival of his two colleagues was "really surreal". "Just thinking of three astronauts meeting in space and speaking Arabic – it was really amazing."
- 18 Several months later, Neyadi was preparing for his return, although his mind is already focused on earthly luxuries. "The first thing I will do is have a hot shower," he said, "and the second will be to have a real cup of coffee."

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. Why is Umm Kulthum important in the article?
2. Why is Sultan al-Neydai making history?
3. What did he feel a responsibility to do during the mission?
4. Which two countries have sent the most people into space?
5. What words are used for Arab-, Russian-, and American-trained space travellers?
6. How many visitors to space have been Arabs?
7. At what altitude is the ISS, and how fast does it spin?
8. What has Neyadi posted in his video updates on social media?
9. Why are Neyadi's photographs of Middle Eastern cities and locations important?
10. What "first" happened in May?

4 Key language

a. Complete the sentences using the present perfect simple.

1. How long _____ (he / play) the guitar?
2. _____ (I / never / break) a promise to my best friend.
3. _____ (the family / find) their dream home and hope to buy it.
4. _____ (My mother / always / tell) me to work hard and be responsible.
5. We haven't seen each other for ages. How _____ (you / be)?
6. She used to post on social media every day, but _____ (she / post) anything all month!
7. All of the _____ (reports / provide) extra information to help you decide.
8. _____ (you / make) this recipe before?
9. Nayadi's _____ (space mission / create) an opportunity for more Arabs to travel to space.

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "Traveling to space gives humans on Earth a new perspective."
- "The International Space Station (ISS) has become more international recently."
- "It is important to reconsider stereotypes about people, places and things."

6 In your own words

a. Do some research on the International Space Station.

- What are some of the investigations and experiments they've done recently?
- Which one do you find the most interesting? Why?
- What are one or two things they learned?

b. Report your findings to the class and share your opinion. Here are some phrases to help you when you talk about facts.

According to the reports, ...

Their experiments proved/disproved...

The scientists learned ...

The facts/data showed ...

They still need to learn more about ...

Here are some phrases to use when stating your opinion.

I think (that) ...

I want to understand why ...

From my perspective, ...

In my understanding/opinion, ...

I'm (not) convinced (that) ...