

**NO SHOW**  
The number of UFOs reported in the US dropped by around 40% between 2012 and 2017.

## Do aliens exist?

An unidentified flying object has been spotted in the sky over Ireland.

### What you need to know

- On 9 November, pilots flying aircraft over Ireland reported seeing an unidentified flying object (UFO) in the sky. The fast-moving light didn't seem to be a plane, and the pilots were told it wasn't a military test.
- Although Irish authorities have said it is unlikely to be an alien spacecraft, the incident has sparked a debate about whether life exists on other planets.
- The first well-known UFO sighting occurred in 1947 when a businessman claimed to see nine high-speed flying objects. He said they moved "like saucers skipping on water". This gave rise to the expression flying saucer.



Do aliens look like this?

We all love a good alien story. From the comical little green aliens in *Toy Story* to the villainous Darth Vader, extraterrestrials play a huge role in popular culture. Whether they actually exist is another matter. For centuries, people have debated whether Earth is the only planet in the universe that supports life, and several missions to space have searched for clues. These explorations haven't found anything yet, but back here on Earth there have been many mysterious sightings of UFOs, and some people are convinced they've seen aliens. Most sightings are easily explained away as meteors, tricks of the light, or hoaxes (a type of prank), but there are some that haven't been resolved. So, are we all alone in the universe, or do aliens exist?

### Yes – they're out there somewhere

The universe is massive. It's so big that astronomers think there could be 500 million planets that can support life just in our galaxy, the Milky Way. It's not crazy to think that one or more of them could be home to aliens. Throughout history, there have been reported sightings of UFOs. Although many have turned out to be asteroids, jets or other human activity, there are still some that can't be explained. It's easy to dismiss the idea of aliens because they sound like something from science fiction, but we have already discovered planets that could, in theory at least, support life. Although they may not travel in flying saucers or have three bulging eyes, the evidence suggests that we are unlikely to be alone.

### No – it's all nonsense

The idea of aliens is exciting, but there's no truth to it. If they did exist, why haven't they visited us yet? We all know aliens, of course. ET, Yoda, Gamora, even the Doctor. We just don't know any real ones. It's our love of these extraterrestrials that makes us hope that they exist – but the science doesn't back it up. A US government study carried out in 1952–1969 looked at 12,000 UFOs and came to the conclusion that there was no evidence of extraterrestrials. The most recent UFO sighting in Ireland was probably a shooting star, particularly as November is the busiest time of year for them. In fact, there are explanations for almost all reported UFO sightings in history – many are either optical illusions or meteors.

### YES Three reasons why aliens exist

- 1 Statistically, the chance of us living on the only planet that can support life in the entire universe is incredibly small.
- 2 There have been sightings of strange and unexplained UFOs throughout history – if they're not aliens, what are they?
- 3 Aliens might not be small, green creatures but other life forms could still exist.

### NO Three reasons why aliens don't exist

- 1 If aliens are real, where are they? If they existed, surely we'd have met them by now. What's taking them so long?
- 2 We simply don't have any evidence that aliens exist – the science doesn't back them up.
- 3 Humans love aliens because there are some great stories about them. It's wishful thinking to believe they actually exist.

### THE WEEKLY POLL

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### What do you think?

Each week we ask our readers to vote in our The Big debate poll. You can find out what we're voting on at the moment by visiting [theweekjunior.co.uk/polls](http://theweekjunior.co.uk/polls).

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