

NASA spacecraft hits asteroid in Earth-protection test

29th September, 2022



Hollywood has made many sci-fi movies about asteroids crashing into Earth and destroying us all. The U.S. space agency NASA may have an answer to this end-of-the-world possibility. It has tested a spacecraft that could change the direction of an asteroid

that might hit our planet. The spacecraft is called DART, which means Double Asteroid Redirection Test. The \$325m craft set off on its journey in November 2021. Its goal was to crash into an asteroid called Dimorphos. The mission was a success. DART collided with the centre of the asteroid at 24,000 kph on Monday. Scientists do not yet know if they have changed the asteroid's direction. They will find out from data they will get in a few weeks' time.

It is the first time that humans have tried to change the direction of a space object. NASA spokesperson Glen Nagle said DART was the first of many "planetary protection missions". He compared our chances of surviving an asteroid hit to the end of the dinosaurs. He said: "We want to have a better chance than the dinosaurs had 65 million years ago." He added that in pre-history, all the dinosaurs could do was to "look up and say, 'Oh asteroid'". Another spokesperson, Lori Glaze, said DART represented a "new era for humankind". She said: "It's an era in which we potentially have the capability to protect ourselves from something like a dangerous, hazardous asteroid impact."

Sources: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [fox13now](https://www.fox13now.com) / [yahho.com](https://www.yahoo.com)

Writing

It is very important that we can protect Earth from asteroids. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

Hollywood / sci-fi / asteroids / space / planet / journey / crash / scientists / data / the first time / humans / protection / surviving / dinosaurs / a new era / humankind

True / False

- 1) Hollywood made a sci-fi movie about the asteroid test. T / F
- 2) The NASA spacecraft is called DRAT. T / F
- 3) The spacecraft hit the asteroid at a speed of 24,000 kph. T / F
- 4) NASA will know if the asteroid changed direction in a few days. T / F
- 5) Scientists changed the direction of an asteroid 10 years ago. T / F
- 6) The dinosaurs didn't have much luck 65 million years ago. T / F
- 7) NASA said the test represented a new era for humankind. T / F
- 8) NASA said we might be able to protect ourselves from asteroid hits. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. crashing | a. age |
| 2. end-of-the-world | b. middle |
| 3. journey | c. representative |
| 4. centre | d. crash |
| 5. direction | e. Armageddon |
| 6. spokesperson | f. possibilities |
| 7. chances | g. smashing |
| 8. era | h. power |
| 9. capability | i. trip |
| 10. impact | j. route |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you know about NASA?
- c) What other dangers are there to our planet?
- d) How did the dinosaurs die out?
- e) What do you know about pre-history?
- f) Do you think there will be wars in space?
- g) Do you think we will live on other planets?
- h) What questions would you like to ask NASA?

Phrase Match

- Hollywood has made many sci-fi movies
- change the direction
- The \$325m craft set
- The mission
- data they will get in
- the first of many planetary
- our chances of
- all the dinosaurs could do was
- a new era
- have the capability
- protection missions
- was a success
- to look up
- of an asteroid
- to protect ourselves
- a few weeks' time
- about asteroids
- for humankind
- off on its journey
- surviving an asteroid hit

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about asteroids?
- What do you think of science fiction movies?
- What are your favourite Hollywood movies?
- Do you worry about the end of the world?
- What would you do if an asteroid was going to hit?
- How interested are you in space?
- Would you like to go into space?
- What three adjectives best describe this story?

Spelling

- iic-sf movies
- odgtnsriey us all
- change the toierindc of an asteroid
- set off on its reynjuo
- The ssnimio was a success
- DART deodcill with the centre
- planetary opotctrein missions
- vvisingur an asteroid hit
- a better chance than the ssnoruida had
- represented a new era for dniamhku
- the ipabcialty to protect ourselves
- something like a dangerous, asdarzuoh asteroid

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. e	3. i	4. b	5. j
6. c	7. f	8. a	9. h	10. d

Role Play

Role A – An Asteroid

You think an asteroid is the think most likely to end our world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not as dangerous. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): climate change, a virus or nuclear war.

Role B – Climate Change

You think climate change is the think most likely to end our world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not as dangerous. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): climate change, a virus or nuclear war: an asteroid, a virus or nuclear war.

Role C – A Virus

You think a virus is the think most likely to end our world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not as dangerous. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): climate change, a virus or nuclear war: climate change, an asteroid or nuclear war.

Role D – Nuclear War

You think nuclear war is the think most likely to end our world. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things are not as dangerous. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): climate change, a virus or nuclear war: climate change, a virus or an asteroid.

Speaking – End of the world

Rank these with your partner. Put the things most likely to end our world at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Hunger
- Viruses
- Loss of species
- A tsunami
- An asteroid hit
- Nuclear war
- Climate change
- Alien invasion

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 F	5 F	6 T	7 T	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.