

## Keep Outer Space Clean

What's in outer space? Planets, stars, meteors, and ... trash. That's right. Space is full of garbage. Scientists call it space trash, or space debris. What is it? Anything made by humans that's still orbiting Earth but is no longer being used. This includes old satellites, parts of spacecrafts, and even an astronaut's lost glove. Most space trash is tiny, but more than 10,000 pieces are wider than four inches. The oldest piece is a satellite that was launched nearly 50 years ago.

Just like garbage on Earth, space trash is becoming a problem. It can damage working spacecrafts and satellites. That's because space trash travels very fast-a piece of junk can orbit at more than 22,000 miles per hour. When it hits another object, it hits hard. Even something as small as a fleck of paint can be dangerous.

To prevent accidents, a special NASA agency tracks space trash. It also works to reduce the amount of garbage in space. Everyone wants to make sure space doesn't become a junkyard!

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