

Aliens

A Look at the Evidence

It is human nature to look up at the night sky and wonder if there is anything beyond our planet. Are we alone? Or are there millions of other worlds not dissimilar from our own?

Should you believe in alien life? Let's take a look at the existing evidence.

Government Video Footage

In 2017, the Department of Defense, a part of the U.S. government, released information about a previously **covert** program that studied reports from military members about UFO sightings.

It's important to remember that the term UFO doesn't necessarily mean alien spacecraft; it just means *unidentified flying object*. It means that someone saw something in the sky and wasn't able to determine what exactly it was.

The *New York Times* ran a story about this secret program. They released two videos taken with an infrared camera attached to military fighter jets. One video shows something oval flying in the sky that suddenly **darts** away, suspiciously. Another video shows a round object that seems to be glowing and flying against the wind in a way that human-made planes simply can't fly.

The government **declined** to release an explanation for what was recorded in these videos.

Ancient Aliens

Ancient cave paintings around the world do show images that resemble

non-human beings and flying objects in the sky. Apache Native American cave paintings show what appear to be flying saucers and creatures that look like ant-people. A painting in an Idaho cave shows what could be a rocket crashing to earth. A painting in Canada shows a flying saucer. Paintings in Utah show human-like creatures but with large eyes and large skulls. Some Native American tribes have passed down stories that refer to "star people" that visited them. Believers view these items as evidence that aliens were busy visiting ancient cultures.

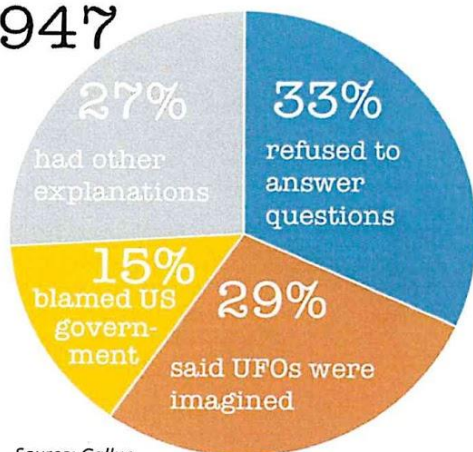
The *Madonna with Saint Giovannino*, a painting from 15th century Italy, shows the Virgin Mary with a man looking up at an uncanny depiction of a flying saucer. Were these ancient artists just using their imaginations like we do when we make alien movies? Certainly our ancient ancestors were capable of **contriving** to



The Madonna with Saint Giovannino. Some believe that there is a depiction of an alien spacecraft, or UFO, in the background of the painting.

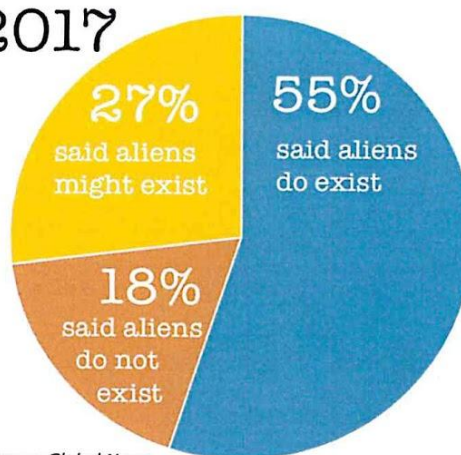
American Opinions on Aliens, UFOs

1947



Source: Gallup

2017



Source: Global News

How have American opinions about aliens and UFOs shifted over the last 70 years?

create fictional stories. Or did they actually encounter visitors from space?

Pilot and Astronaut Sightings

There are numerous accounts from airline pilots, military pilots, and actual astronauts of unidentifiable and **peculiar** objects flying in the sky.

In 2018, two commercial airline pilots claimed they saw an unidentified flying object pass overhead while flying over the Arizona desert. After hearing reports from a Learjet pilot about a mysterious object in the sky, an air traffic controller alerted an American Airlines pilot who was in the area. About fifteen minutes later, the American Airlines pilot radioed back to the air traffic controller. "It's American 1095. Yeah, something just passed over us. I don't know what it was, but at least two-three thousand feet above us. Passed right over the top of us." The Federal Aviation Administration confirmed that the controller was unable to verify that any other aircraft **should** have been in the area at the time. The strange encounter happened not far from Roswell, New Mexico, a city famous for a mysterious "flying saucer" crash in the late 1940s.

The famous astronaut Buzz Aldrin himself saw something flying outside of his Apollo 11 rocket. Mission control was able to say that the object was

about 6000 feet away from Apollo 11. Rumors have swirled around this sighting for decades, but there's still no definitive answer about what Aldrin and other astronauts saw.

According to Aldrin, "On Apollo 11 in route to the moon, I observed a light out the window that appeared to be moving alongside us. There were many explanations of

what that could be, other than another spacecraft from another world.."

Civilian Sightings

Regular people around the world have been reporting UFO sightings for at least hundreds of years. And there are certainly situations where many people who have never met report seeing the same thing in the night sky. Sometimes sightings can be explained by things like a **wayward** weather balloon or military training, but other sightings remain mysterious. There are also spots in the world that are "hot spots" for UFO sightings, such as Bonnybridge, Scotland where an average of 300 sightings are reported each year, or Wiltshire, England where crop circles are commonly found in fields and strange lights are spotted.

Do the Math

Probability is a math term for how likely something is to occur. Based on the size of the universe (apparently infinite) and the number of planets with life sustaining elements, probability tells us that chances are strong that some type of alien life exists. However, this does not mean that the alien life is anywhere near us, or capable of contacting or visiting us!

So, is there enough evidence to believe? That's up to you to decide.

Nonfiction Article of the Week

7-7: Aliens: A Look at the Evidence

Use the “Highlight” tool (looks like a pen) to color your answers according to the directions below.

Informational Text

Skill: Text Evidence

Finding Text Evidence

Find each piece of text evidence in the article and highlight OR underline it with the color specified.

For items 1-4, you'll be citing textual evidence to support what the text says explicitly.

1. Find the sentences that explain the meaning of the acronym UFO. Highlight them in **blue**.
2. Find the sentence that explains where crop circles are commonly found and highlight it in **green**.
3. Find the sentence that reveals how the government explained the video footage released in 2017 and highlight it in **purple**.
4. Find the sentence that suggests one way our ancestors were like us. Highlight it in **gray**.

For items 5-8, you'll be citing one piece or multiple pieces of textual evidence to support inferences drawn from the text.

5. Find one piece of evidence that supports the idea that some Native American tribes believed in aliens. Highlight it in **orange**.
6. Find one piece of evidence from the article that supports the idea that what Buzz Aldrin saw was probably not from another planet. Highlight it in **yellow**.
7. Find three pieces of text evidence that provide specific evidence that our ancestors may have seen alien life or UFOs. Highlight them in **pink**.
8. Find two details from the article that supports this statement:

The southwestern U.S. is a hotbed for suspicious alien activity. Highlight them in **red**.

Nonfiction Article of the Week

7-7: Aliens: A Look at the Evidence

Use the **BLUE** text boxes to record your answers

Informational Text

Skill: Literal Comprehension

Comprehension Quiz

Choose the best answer according to the article.

1. The Department of Defense recently released two videos that reportedly show...

- a. UFOs.
- b. proof of crop circles.
- c. aliens.
- d. all of these

2. Some Native American tribes have passed down stories that refer to _____ that visited them.

- a. ant people
- b. star people
- c. alien people
- d. flying saucers

3. Some believe the Madonna with Saint Giovannino provides proof of alien life. What is the Madonna with Saint Giovannino?

- a. a sculpture
- b. cave drawings
- c. mounds
- d. a painting

4. In 2018, a Learjet airline pilot told _____ that he saw an unusual flying object in the sky.

- a. the FBI
- b. air traffic controllers
- c. a flight attendant
- d. all of these

5. The Learjet pilot's story was verified by _____.

- a. another airline pilot
- b. an astronaut
- c. the U.S. government
- d. none of these

6. What did famous astronaut Buzz Aldrin claim to see flying outside of his Apollo 11 rocket?

- e. a flying saucer
- f. an unidentified flying object
- g. lights
- h. something not from this world

7. According to the opinion polls included in the article, more Americans claim to believe in aliens today than did in 1947.

- a. true
- b. false

8. Probability tells us that there is little actual chance of intelligent life existing outside of our planet Earth.

- a. true
- b. false

Reference Sheet

Use this sheet to assist you with the following activity.

concealed – *adj.* kept secret or hidden from sight

contrive – *v.* to make happen in a clever way or with difficulty

covert – *adj.* not openly acknowledged or displayed; secret or hidden

dart – *v.* to run or move quickly or suddenly with purpose

dash – *v.* to run or move quickly or suddenly

fascinating – *adj.* very interesting or appealing

mysterious – *adj.* strange, unknown, or difficult to understand; to behave in a way that makes others feel that you are keeping a secret

peculiar – *adj.* not normal or typical; strange

scheme – *v.* a clever and often dishonest plan to do or get something

scamper – *v.* to run or move quickly and playfully

sprint – *v.* to run or go very fast for a short distance

undercover – *adj.* done in a secret way in order to catch criminals or collect information

Nonfiction Article of the Week

7-7: Aliens: A Look at the Evidence

Informational Text

Skill: Analyze Word Choice

Analyze Word Choice and Meaning

Answer these questions according to the article. You'll need a dictionary and thesaurus (or reference sheet) to complete.

Use the BLACK text boxes to record your answers.

1. word: **covert**

sentence: *In 2017 the Department of Defense, a part of the US government, released information about a **covert** program that studied reports from military members about UFO sightings.*

A. Is it a good choice of word given the context it is in? Provide at least one reason to support your analysis.

B. mysterious, concealed, undercover

Which of the words below could **best** replace the word **covert** in the sentence above and still maintain the same, or very close, denotation (meaning) and connotation (feeling)? Explain your answer.

2. word: **darts**

sentence: *One video shows something oval flying in the sky that suddenly **darts** away, suspiciously.*

A. Is it a good choice of word given the context it is in? Provide at least one reason to support your analysis.

B. sprint, scamper, dash

Which of the words below could **best** replace the word **dart** in the sentence above and still maintain the same, or very close, denotation (meaning) and connotation (feeling)? Explain your answer.

Nonfiction Article of the Week

7-7: Aliens: A Look at the Evidence

Informational Text

Skill: Analyze Word Choice

Use the BLACK text boxes to record your answers.

3. word: **contriving**

sentence: *Certainly our ancient ancestors were capable of **contriving** to creative fictional stories.*

A. Is it a good choice of word given the context it is in? Provide at least one reason to support your analysis.

B. Consider replacing **scheming** with the word **contriving**. How is it different from **contriving**? Which word is more **precise**?

4. word: **peculiar**

sentence: *There are numerous accounts from airline pilots, military pilots and actual astronauts of unidentifiable and **peculiar** objects flying in the sky.*

A. Is it a good choice of word given the context it is in? Provide at least one reason to support your analysis.

B. Consider replacing **peculiar** with the word **fascinating**. Which word gives the sentence a more positive tone? Which word gives the sentence a more negative tone? Explain.

Skills Test

Use the **BLUE** text boxes to
record your answers

Choose the best answer.

1. Which definition for **wayward** is most accurate for how it is used in the subsection **Civilian Sightings**?
☐
 - a. to behave badly
 - b. not moving in the intended or expected direction
 - c. tending to behave in ways that are not socially acceptable
 - d. unable to be managed

2. Read this sentence: *Rumors have **swirled** around this sighting for decades, but there's still no definitive answer about what Aldrin and others saw.* In which sentence below is the word **swirled** used the same as it is used in the sentence above?
☐
 - a. Cold water **swirled** around my ankles as the waves crashed against the shore.
 - b. The smoke **swirled** up from the campfire, giving their position away to anyone else in the forest.
 - c. Fear and uncertainty have **swirled** around the community since the mayor was found murdered.
 - d. Natasha **swirled** a new rumor about the group projects in science.

3. Find the word **darts** in the article (**Government Video Footage**). In which sentence below is the word used closest to how it is used in the article?
☐
 - a. Even though I pushed the joystick right, remote control car made a sudden **dart** to the left.
 - b. It took two tranquilizer **darts** to finally sedate the elephant.
 - c. Jericho felt a sudden **dart** of pain run down his spine.
 - d. The rabbit **darted** towards the field, eager to escape.

4. Read this sentence from the article: *In 2017, the Department of Defense, a part of the U.S. government, released information about a previously **covert** program that studied reports from military members about UFO sightings.* Which statement below is true about the meaning of the sentence?
☐
 - a. The U.S. government admitted that it covered up evidence of aliens traveling to Earth.
 - b. The U.S. government admitted to secretly studying suspicious objects in the sky.
 - c. The U.S. government has been trying to hide the existence of UFOs for centuries.
 - d. The U.S. government has been trying to hide the truth about alien life from its citizens.

5. Which excerpt from the article **best** supports your answer to the previous question?
☐
 - a. The *New York Times* ran a story about this secret program.
 - b. The government declined to release an explanation for what was recorded in these videos.
 - c. Ancient cave paintings around the world do show images that resemble non-human beings and flying objects in the sky.
 - d. It means that someone saw something in the sky and wasn't able to determine what exactly it was.

6. Read this sentence from the article: *Based on the size of the universe (apparently infinite) and the number of planets with life sustaining elements, probability tells us that chances are strong that some type of alien life exists.* Which two words from the sentence **best** represent the meaning of the sentence?
☐
 - a. strong, exists
 - b. alien, life
 - c. probability, chances
 - d. planets, elements