
BACK TO EARTH WITH A BUMP!

Reported by Amanda Kelper, Media Correspondent, London

Last week, British astronaut Tim Peake returned home from an incredible six month stay aboard the International Space Station (ISS), alongside his crewmates Yuri Malenchenko and Timothy Kopra. He is the first British astronaut to have lived on the ISS.

The men were launched into space on 15th December 2015 and in the months before take-off, they trained intensively for their trip. The mission involved conducting experiments, testing out new technology and inspiring the next generation of space travellers. Peake told reporters that the highlight of his mission was a spacewalk where he had to make a repair on the space station. Whilst away from home, Tim also ran the equivalent of the London Marathon on his treadmill.

Having circled the planet nearly 3,000 times in 186 days, the crew returned home to Earth via a Soyuz capsule, which reached speeds of up to 28,000 kilometres per hour (25 times the speed of sound). The touchdown was bumpy due to high winds, however the astronauts landed safely in Kazakhstan. They all returned in good health. Having arrived back on solid ground, the astronauts were pulled out of the capsule and carried as their leg muscles were too weak to walk. Whilst sitting in their space suits, the men were checked over by medical staff. During these checks, Peake was asked how it felt to be home, 'The smells of Earth are so strong and it's wonderful to be back in the fresh air.'

Tim later flew from Kazakhstan to the headquarters of the European Space Agency in Cologne, Germany where he is recovering and adjusting to life back on Earth. Scientists are carrying out tests to see how his body has been affected by his time in space.



Landing with a bump! Tim Peake lands safely in Kazakhstan.

In a recent press conference, Peake commented on how he'd missed family and friends, and even the rain. Tim expressed how much he was now looking forward to spending some quality time with his family. When asked if he'd return to space in the future, he replied, '...in a heartbeat.'

His service to science has earned him an honour from the Queen. Peake was made a CMG, or companion of the order of St Michael and St George. In response, Tim said, 'I am only one privileged person in a complex team of technicians, scientists, engineers, educators, trainers and flight directors, all working in pursuit of one of the greatest scientific and technical challenges of our time – exploring our solar system for the benefit of people on Earth. This award is for them.'

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Comprehension Questions

Answer questions in full sentences.

1. How long had Peake been living on the ISS?

2. Write down **two** jobs Tim had to do on the mission.

3. Why were the astronauts carried out of the capsule?

4. What did Peake notice once he'd left the capsule?

5. What was hard about being on the ISS for so long?

6. Why do you think Tim dedicated his special honour to the entire team?

7. Give **two** reasons why space travel is important.

8. Why has a picture and caption been added to the report?

Back To Earth With A Bump! Answers

1. How long had Peake been living on the ISS?
Tim Peake had been living on the ISS for six months.
2. Write down **two** jobs Tim had to do on the mission.
Any two of; he conducted experiments, tested out new technology and did necessary repairs on the ISS.
3. Why were the astronauts carried out of the capsule?
They were carried as their leg muscles were too weak to walk.
4. What did Peake notice once he'd left the capsule?
He noticed the smells of Earth and the fresh air.
5. What was hard about being on the ISS for so long?
Tim said that being away from his family and friends for such a long time wasn't easy.
6. Why do you think Tim dedicated his special honour to the entire team?
Own answers, which may include reference to his space travel mission being a team effort.
7. Give a reason why space travel is important.
Own answer, which may include to make new discoveries, to find out if there's life in other parts of the Solar System, to conduct important experiments in space, etc.
8. Why has a picture and caption been added to the report?
It has been added to make the report more eye-catching and interesting to the reader.