



More than 200,000 people have applied for the Mars mission!

# Would You Move to Mars?

Two friends face off on the debate. YOU decide who wins.

**F**our lucky (or unlucky?) people could be going to Mars by the year 2026. The mission, which is being organized by a company called Mars One, is to set up a permanent human colony. These brave pioneers will grow their own food, research, explore, and report back to Earth regularly.

Unfortunately, there is a catch: It's a one-way trip. The colonists will never return to Earth. *Ever.*

Turn the page to read the debate. ➔

## I Would Be Famous!

Going to Mars is the opportunity of a lifetime.

Hi Mark!

I am writing to you in the middle of the night because I am way too excited to sleep. I have just made a HUGE decision. This group called Mars One is starting the first human settlement on Mars, and Mark—I've decided to go. (Or at least, I've decided to apply the day I turn 18.)

Can you even imagine what an amazing adventure it would be? I would get to train here on Earth with an **elite** group of astronauts. I would get to fly through space at lightning speeds. I would get to live in a landscape so wondrous it would be like stepping into my favorite sci-fi movie. And at night, when I stare

up at the sky, one of those bright dots would be Earth.

But this is about something a lot bigger than having an adventure. I don't mean to sound full of myself, but this is a chance to be part of history. I'd be taking my place alongside the great explorers who set out across the Atlantic Ocean in search of new lands, you know?

Of course, we're all going to have to move to Mars sooner or later—or to some other planet, at least. The famous scientist Stephen Hawking says that if we want our species to survive, we need to **colonize** other planets, because we are going to run out of space and resources here on Earth. In the meantime, by moving to Mars I'd be helping to improve the quality of life on Earth. According to Mars One, scientists and engineers are going to have to do a lot of work to pull this mission off. And that work will lead to **innovation** in all sorts of areas, like recycling, solar energy, food production, and medicine.

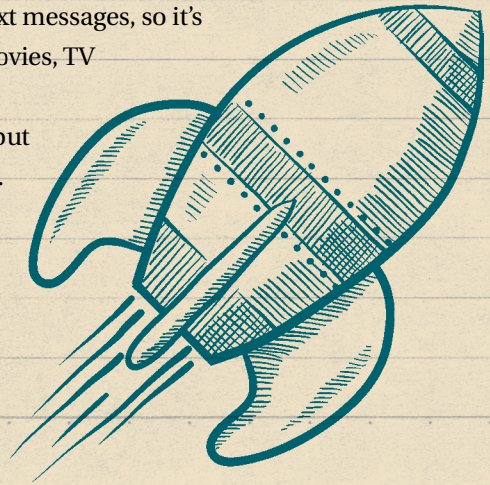
Now, there is something about the Mars One mission I haven't mentioned, and I admit it might be kind of hard to accept. The mission is one-way. You go to Mars and you never come back. Apparently, bringing people home would make the whole thing way too complicated and expensive. And yeah—that's pretty crazy to think about. But it will be possible to communicate with friends on Earth through video, voice, or text messages, so it's not like I'd be completely cut off. Plus, we'd still get to watch movies, TV shows, and sports.

I'd miss you—and my family and all my other friends too—but I've thought about this a lot. I can't wait to hear what you think.

I hope you are as excited as I am.

XO,

Alex



NO

## Have You Lost Your Mind?

Going to Mars is an insane death wish.

Hi Alex,

Now I'm the one who can't sleep. I've been lying in bed, staring at the ceiling, wondering if my friend Alex has COMPLETELY LOST HER MIND. Did you see the "Risks and Challenges" page on the Mars One website? I quote: "Mars is an unforgiving environment where a small mistake or accident can result in large failure, injury, and death." Alex!!!!!!!

Look, I get why this **appeals** to you. Your sense of adventure is one of the things I love about you. But I don't believe you've thought this through. You're talking about moving to a planet with a completely different environment. On Mars, you die if you go outside without a spacesuit. Think about that.

Let's also take a moment to consider the trip there. It takes seven months to get to Mars. That's 210 days crammed into a tiny spaceship with three other people and nothing but moist towelettes to keep you clean. That alone would be enough to stop me, but I know: You can take it. You're tough.

Can you take **cosmic radiation**, though? According to an article I read, you'd be exposed to low levels of cosmic radiation, which is as scary as it sounds. It's a dangerous form of energy found in space that could damage your brain. I think it goes without saying that your brain is really important when you're on this "amazing adventure," as you put it.

I could go on about the dangers, but I'll stop, because I want to talk about the bigger picture here—the whole leaving-Earth-forever thing. You'd never hear birds sing or feel sand between your toes. You'd never breathe fresh air or go to a football game. Earth is your home, Alex. And if you really want to improve recycling and solar power and all that—you can do it from here.

I don't understand how you can so easily dismiss the difficulty of leaving your friends and family either. Do you know that there will be a time delay in sending and receiving messages? That means you'd never have a real-time conversation with your parents (or me) again. And while I read all about how careful Mars One is being in putting together groups of colonists who can work together . . . well, you've seen reality TV. My guess is that it won't take long before the colonists are **plotting** to kill each other.

It comforts me to know that, given the huge number of nutcases who want to go to Mars, the odds of your being chosen are slim. Still, please listen to my advice: Do. Not. Apply. Stay happy. Stay alive. Stay on Earth.

Your friend,

Mark



### SCAVENGER HUNT

**Directions:** Hunt through each letter for the following elements.

1. Underline the **central idea**, or **central claim**.
2. Put a star next to two pieces of **supporting evidence**.
3. Circle the **counterargument**.
4. Put a double star next to the writer's **rebuttal**.

**YOU decide:** Who made the stronger argument?