

Known as a musical chameleon for his ever-changing appearance and sound, **David Bowie** was born **David Robert Jones** in Brixton, South London, England, on January 8, 1947. Out of fear of being confused with Davy Jones of The Monkees, David changed his last name to **Bowie**, a name that was inspired by the knife developed by the 19th-century American pioneer Jim Bowie. After recording a first, unsuccessful solo album, in the 60s Bowie exited the music world for a temporary period. For several weeks in 1967 he lived at a Buddhist monastery in Scotland. Bowie later started his own mime troupe called Feathers. By early 1969, Bowie had returned full time to music. He is perhaps best known for pioneering what became known as **glam rock** - a pop music genre that emerged in Britain in the early 1970s. It was characterized by singers and musicians who wore **outrageous clothes**, makeup and hairstyles. In 1969 he signed a deal with Mercury Records and that summer released the single "**Space Oddity**." Bowie later said the song came to him after seeing Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey: *"I went stoned out of my mind to see the movie and it really freaked me out, especially the trip passage."*



Over the years, Bowie recorded many iconic tunes, including “Ziggy Stardust,” “Heroes” and “Let’s Dance”. He has also appeared in 27 movies and was a modern art critic for a leading British newspaper. The music icon died on January 10, 2016, two days after his 69th birthday. He was survived by his wife Iman, his son Duncan Jones and daughter Alexandria, and his step-daughter Zulekha Haywood. Bowie also left behind an impressive musical legacy, which included 26 albums. His producer and friend Tony Visconti wrote on Facebook that his last record, **Blackstar**, was *"his parting gift."*

## DISCUSS:

- 1) The world would be a better place if we didn't have any secrets.
- 2) What does music mean to you?
- 3) What do you know about David Bowie?
- 4) What do you think of 70+-year-old rockers?
- 5) How do you feel when your favourite artists release a new album?
- 6) Is it important to have varied musical tastes? Are your tastes varied?
- 7) Which is more important to you, music or TV?
- 8) How prolific is your favourite recording artist?
- 9) Would you like to (Do you) wear outrageous clothes, make-up, etc?
- 10) Do you agree with Shakespeare that music is the food of love?
- 11) What do you think of the music your parents listen(ed) to?
- 12) Is today's music all the same?
- 13) Why is it that music can change the way you feel?
- 14) What questions would you like to ask David Bowie?

## Speaking - Music

What do you like best? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- rock
- pop
- opera
- folk
- hip-hop
- jazz
- classical
- flamenco





# SPACE ODDITY

## 1) Listen to the song and fill in the blanks.

Ground Control to Major Tom  
Ground Control to Major Tom  
Take your protein pills and put your 1..... on

(Ten)  
Ground 2.....

(Nine)  
To Major Tom  
(Eight, seven, six)  
Commencing countdown

(Five)  
Engines on  
(Four, three, two)  
Check ignition

(One)  
And may 3.....'s love  
(Lift-off)  
Be with you

This is Ground Control to Major Tom  
You've 4..... made the grade  
And the 5..... want to know whose shirts you 6.....  
Now it's 7..... to leave the capsule if you dare

This is Major Tom to Ground Control  
I'm stepping through the 8.....  
And I'm floating in a most peculiar 9.....  
And the stars look very 10..... today

For here am I 11..... in a tin can  
Far above the 12.....  
Planet Earth is 13.....  
And there's 14..... I can do

Though I'm past one 15..... thousand miles  
I'm feeling 16..... still  
And I think my spaceship 17.....

which way to go  
Tell my wife I 18..... her very much  
She knows

Ground Control to Major Tom  
Your circuit's 19....., there's something wrong  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you hear me, Major Tom?  
Can you he—

Here am I floating 'round my tin can  
Far 20..... the Moon  
Planet Earth is blue  
And there's nothing I can do

**David Bowie, 1969**



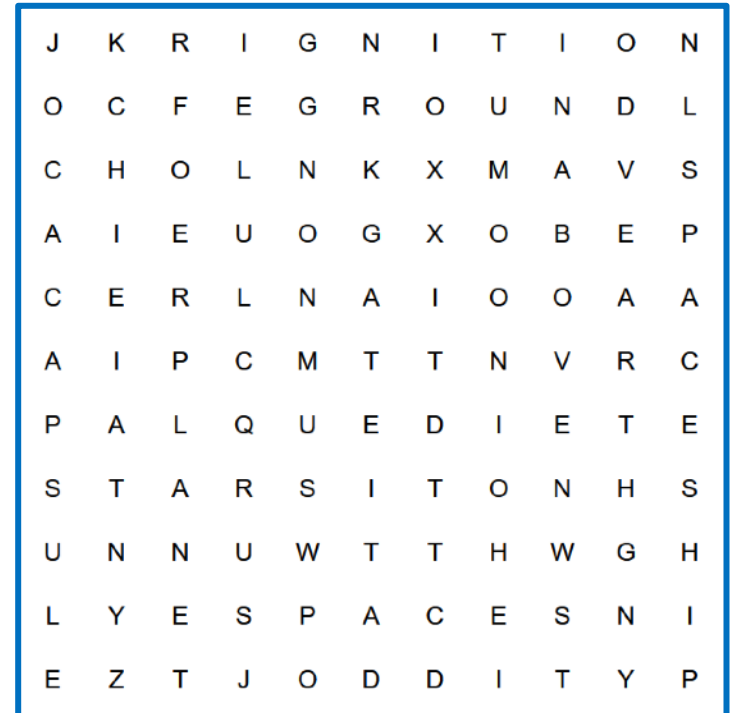
The song *Space Oddity* is inspired by the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, directed by Stanley Kubrick and released in 1968.

**Apollo 11:** in July 1969, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are the first human beings to walk on the Moon.

Hidden words:

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> above     | <input type="checkbox"/> helmet    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> capsule   | <input type="checkbox"/> ignition  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> circuit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Moon      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> countdown | <input type="checkbox"/> oddity    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Earth     | <input type="checkbox"/> planet    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> engine    | <input type="checkbox"/> space     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> floating  | <input type="checkbox"/> spaceship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ground    | <input type="checkbox"/> stars     |

2) Word search



3) Write the words from the grid that match the following definitions.

1. A vehicle used for travel in space. ....
- i. The part of a spacecraft in which the astronauts live. ....
1. Large balls of burning gas in space that are usually seen from Earth as points of light in the sky at night. ....
2. In a higher position than something else. / Over. ....
3. The world on which we live. ....
4. The electrical system that starts the engine. ....
- a. Someone or something that is strange and unusual. ....
5. A machine that uses energy to produce movement. ....
6. A closed system of wires through which electricity can flow. ....

4) Use words from the grid to fill in the blanks.

1. Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the .....
2. In 1961, Yuri Gagarin was the first human being to travel into .....
3. The ..... to the rocket launch will begin at 21:00.
4. The astronaut is ..... because there is no gravity in space.
5. You have to wear a ..... to protect your head.
6. Mars is also called the Red .....
7. The space capsule is parachuted slowly to Earth and lands on the .....

5) Our Solar System . <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=libKVRa01L8>

1. Watch the National Geographic video and write the names of the planets on the picture:

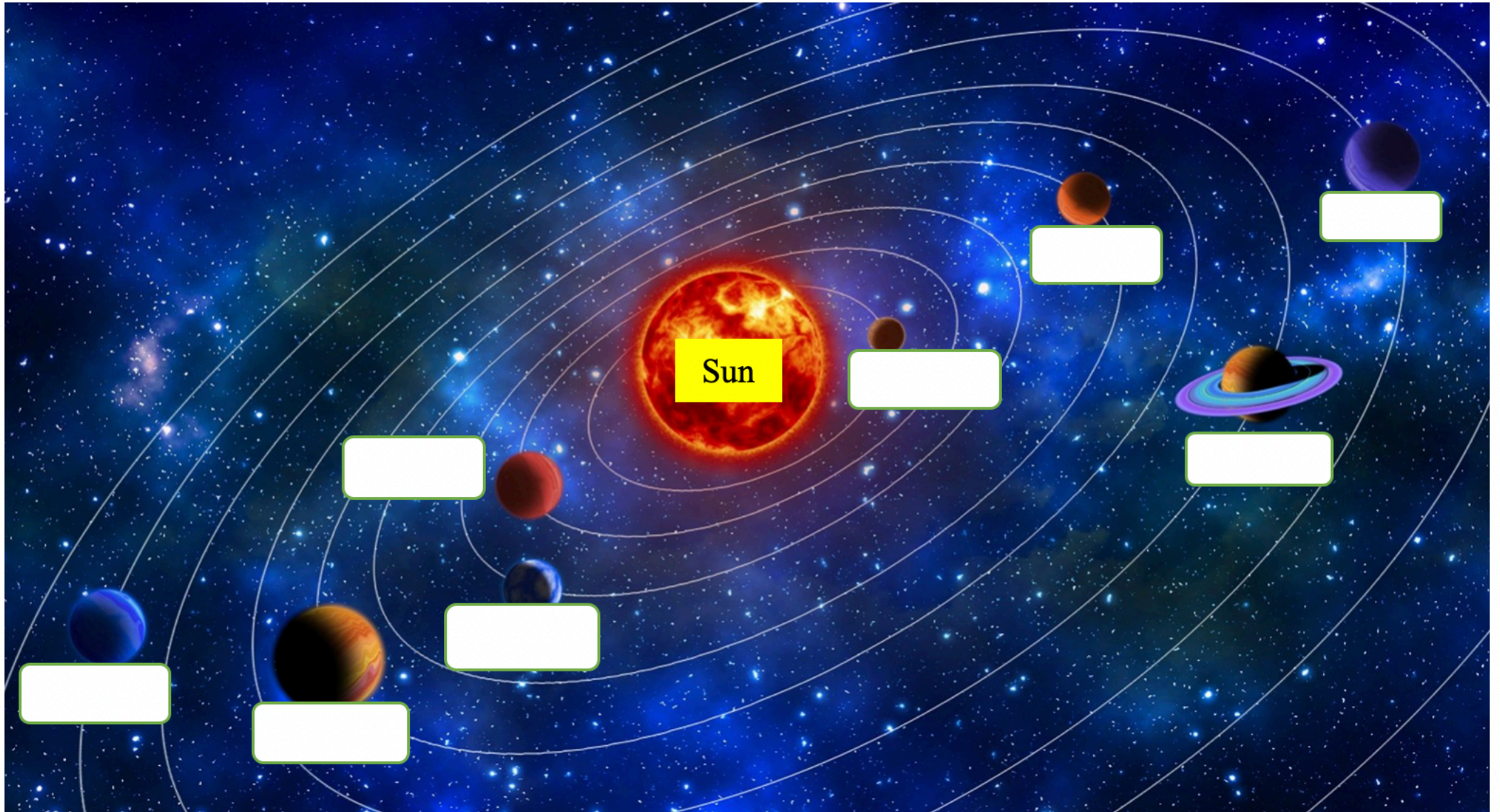
Earth ♦ Jupiter ♦ Neptune ♦ Mars ♦ Mercury ♦ Saturn ♦ Uranus ♦ Venus

2. Then answer the following questions:

What is the name of our galaxy? .....

Which planet is famous for its rings? .....

Which planet is the largest of our solar system? .....



Sun

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

[Blank label box]

## WHERE ARE YOU, MAJOR TOM ??

Major Tom first appeared in the song 'Space Oddity', from the album *David Bowie*.

In it, Major Tom leaves Earth is successful and everything seems to be going according to plan. During the flight, ("past one hundred thousand miles"), he says that "he feels very still" and thinks that "my spaceship knows which way to go", before saying "Tell my wife I love her very much." Control then tells him: "Ground Control to Major Tom: your circuit's dead, there's something wrong", and they attempt to get back in touch with him.

Tom's final words in the song (which are possibly not heard by Ground Control) are: "Here am I floating 'round my tin can, far above the moon. Planet Earth is blue, and there's nothing I can do."

In the film that came with it, Bowie plays Major Tom, Ground Control, and the Countdown Announcer.

Two women appear as either angels or aliens, or maybe both. At one stage, the two women take off Major Tom's helmet and spacesuit.

Tom can then be seen spinning around in space, before the video ends with Tom sitting in his tin can, with the two women by his side.

A sequel was released 11 years later, from his LP *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)*. While the song actually doesn't reveal much about Major Tom, the song calls him a "junkie," someone with a heroin addiction or other habits.

The lyrics appear to describe Bowie's own soul searching, rather than an actual continuation of the Major Tom story.

With Bowie's own struggles of drug addiction, it has been noted that the "Major Tom" line could actually be autobiographical.

However, the song could also be interpreted to reveal more information on Tom's story. The song may refer an event happening years after 'Space Oddity'.

Ground control receive a message from the "Action Man" (Tom), and he says: "I've loved all I've needed to love. Sordid details following...". He then talks about how "the shrieking of nothing" is killing him, how all he has is his pictures of women to keep him company, and how he now doesn't have money or hair.

The song refers directly to Tom at the end, revealing that he has become something of a legend, but sadly not for his heroic feats. He has now become a nursery rhyme with the public, with mothers warning their children about drug use ("to get things done, you'd better not mess with Major Tom").

Bowie then released "Hallo Spaceboy" on his 1996 album *Outside*. While this song doesn't directly reference Major Tom, there are some references to the character in the remixed version that he released with the Pet Shop Boys. The remix features lyrics from 'Space Oddity', that are sung by Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant.

The music video of Bowie's song 'Blackstar' - from the album of the same name - was released in 2016 just two days before his death. In it, a dead astronaut is shown. His skull is taken by an alien woman who takes it back to what might be a a cult which now worships the relic. Director Johan Renck later said of the astronaut in question: "to me, it was 100% Major Tom."

## ASHES TO ASHES (Scary Monster, 1980)

Do you remember a guy that's been  
In such an early song?  
I've heard a rumor from Ground Control  
Oh no, don't say it's true  
They got a message from the Action Man  
"I'm happy, hope you're happy too  
I've loved all I've needed, love  
Sordid details following"  
The shrieking of nothing is killing, just  
Pictures of Jap girls in synthesis and I  
Ain't got no money and I ain't got no hair  
But I'm hoping to kick but the planet it's glowing

Ashes to ashes, funk to funky  
We know Major Tom's a junkie  
Strung out in heaven's high  
Hitting an all-time low

Time and again I tell myself  
I'll stay clean tonight  
But the little green wheels are following me  
Oh no, not again  
I'm stuck with a valuable friend  
"I'm happy, hope you're happy too"  
One flash of light but no smoking pistol  
I never done good things (I never done good things)  
I never done bad things (I never done bad things)  
I never did anything out of the blue, woh-o-oh  
Want an axe to break the ice  
Wanna come down right now

Ashes to ashes, funk to funky  
We know Major Tom's a junkie  
Strung out in heaven's high  
Hitting an all-time low

My mother said, to get things done  
You'd better not mess with Major Tom  
My mother said, to get things done  
You'd better not mess with Major Tom

