

READING COMPREHENSION

Earth safe from asteroid hit for 100 years

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Scientists from NASA have confirmed that asteroids will not be a danger to Earth for the next 100 years. This is good news for anyone who was worrying about the end of the world. NASA has been monitoring an asteroid called Apophis for 17 years. They discovered the 335-metre space rock in 2004. They thought it could be a danger to our planet, so they put it on their list of the most hazardous asteroids that could threaten Earth. The scientists originally said the asteroid could kill over 10 million people if it hit Earth. They predicted it could hit our planet in 2029. They later changed this to 2068. However, their latest prediction is that Earth will be safe from Apophis for the next 100 years.

The scientists used radar to predict the asteroid's orbit around the sun. NASA scientist Marina Brozovic said: "We were able to acquire incredibly precise information about its distance to an accuracy of about 150 meters." She said the giant space rock is currently "a safe distance of 10.6 million miles away from Earth". However, Apophis will come closer in 2029. It will come within 20,000 miles of Earth on April the 13th in that year. Another scientist was glad Apophis is no longer a danger to us. He said: "There's a certain sense of satisfaction to see it removed from the risk list, and we're looking forward to the science we might uncover during its close approach to Earth in 2029."

Sources: theguardian.com / cnn.com / npr.org

Writing

We should spend more money on defending Earth from asteroids. Discuss.

True / False

- a Scientists said an asteroid will hit Earth in 100 years from now. T / F
- b Scientists started following an asteroid called Apophos 20 years ago. T / F
- c The asteroid Apophos is on a hazardous asteroid list. T / F
- d Scientists once thought Apophos could hit Earth in 2068. T / F
- e Scientists used radar to track the sun's orbit around the asteroid. T / F
- f Apophos is now 10.6 million from Earth. T / F
- g The asteroid will come as close as 20,000 miles away in 2029. T / F
- h A scientist is not satisfied the asteroid is not on the risk list. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 danger | a. endanger |
| 2 monitoring | b. feeling |
| 3 threaten | c. path |
| 4 predicted | d. watching |
| 5 safe | e. find |
| 6 orbit | f. hazard |
| 7 precise | g. presently |
| 8 currently | h. forecast |
| 9 sense | i. accurate |
| 10 uncover | j. secure |

Discussion – Student A

- a What do you think about what you read?
- b What do you want to know about asteroids?
- c What would happen if an asteroid hit Earth?
- d What would you do if you knew an asteroid would hit Earth tomorrow?
- e What is an asteroid?
- f What three adjectives best describe this story?
- g What science might scientists uncover from a passing asteroid?
- h What questions would you like to ask the scientists?