

P1 V1 T1

Take-off sequence

Propellant loading.....

Hi Everyone. Here I am; Tazz Anderson, a Geologist with a job to do.

I've rattled up the tower in the elevator then crawled down through a hatch which they've sealed behind me. My ear defenders will help muffle the boom. The whole of the inside is no bigger than a large family car. And here's me, wedged low down at the base of the cockpit in my space suit with its own oxygen supply, studying all the familiar panels and displays.

Systems propulsion....GO

Vehicle electrical.....GO

Flight transmission system.....Go

The launchpad has been busy with people since dawn but now, at 3 in the afternoon, there's no one in sight because they are enforcing the exclusion zone. I don't feel alone though; I'm in constant contact with the ground through my friendly onboard computer MIC. MIC stands for Multioperation Inflight Computer.

Are you comfortable Tazz?

No!

Sorry to hear that

That's OK, MIC. It's not your fault.

When I talk to MIC, I'm looking at a monitor with a yellow smiley face. The Tec team have made a cool graphic of a moving mouth which does make him seem more like a human.

I'm glad you think so, Tazz

Your tuneful voice sounds a bit like my Uncle Hugo; he's quite posh.

Hundreds of people are watching back at UK Space Agency and online in schools; camera lenses are trained on this moment. I feel as if the planet is holding its breath to see the smallest ant, (me!), daring to climb up the tower, squeeze myself inside a spaceship and blast away.

I've eaten a simple last-day-on- Earth meal: cereal, eggs, a peach, before leaving quarantine where I've spent the past 5 days. My family could only talk to me from behind a glass screen to avoid passing on any illnesses. I wasn't even allowed a final hug with my Shetland Sheepdog, Puzzle. Ed, my back-up, stayed there with me. He will take over the mission if I have to pull out. But that's never going to happen. Sorry Ed!

Thanks for subscribing to my Vlog. I'll describe as much as I can for you. There's a webcam trained on me the whole time. It will pick up everything I say, even if I turn my back. We can't give you video all the time; the visuals would go fuzzy. So, you will see mainly Space pictures from the archive and get extra information on the trip with just occasional live footage of yours truly.

We have a clear day for launch; good visibility, the wind has dropped. There's a window of half an hour for the launch to work otherwise they would have to abort it. That means I must to take off within that period for weather and engine reasons. But now the countdown is about to start. Please don't let them find a tiny malfunction that makes everything stop.

I brought with me three little origami birds printed with red and yellow flowers. I've tied them with thread just beside the fuel gauges where I can watch them. You'll see why later on.