

PART 2 – IN ORBIT

It is four hours since lift-off when I left earth in my spacecraft.

I am very hot in my spacesuit. My gloves are too thick for me to be able to use the controls so my computer, MIC, is flying the rocket.

He tells me, “It is all going well, Tazz. We are flying away from earth at 17,000 miles per hour. Everything is ok. How are you feeling?”

“I am excited,” I tell him. “I can see the Earth through my window.”

The 3 little paper birds I brought with me are floating about. This shows me that there is no gravity. I am weightless.

“You can take your space suit off now,” MIC tells me.

It feels good to be able to move around the cabin. It is not very big, but I have enough room to do a forward roll in the air. I feel very strange. It makes me sick. I have to use a towel to clean up the sick as it floats around the cabin.

Before I was an astronaut I went to university to become a scientist. Then I had to do lots of tests to see if I was fit and healthy.

In my astronaut training I practised being weightless. They put me in a centrifuge, which is like a very, very fast fairground ride. You sit in a small pod on the end of a long arm and it spins you round. To learn to move in space I had to wear a spacesuit in a swimming pool.

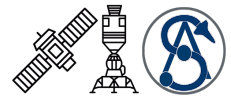
I also trained in a simulator. This is a pretend spacecraft where I learnt how to fly it. I could make mistakes and practice until I got everything right. My training lasted two years.

I even had to learn how to eat and drink. I am sucking orange juice from a pouch, then I will heat up a tube of vegetable soup.

“Tazz,” says MIC, “your mum and dad are calling.”

I turn on the video screen to see them.

“Hello, love,” says my mum.



“Hi Tazz,” says my dad. “We watched the rocket launch on the TV. It was amazing.”

“How are you feeling?” says mum.

“A little bit sick. But I will be all right,” I tell her.

“Is it going well?” asks dad.

“Yes. It is all fine,” I say. “How is my dog, Puzzle?” I ask them.

“She’s having fun playing in the garden, chasing rabbits,” my mum says.

“You must be tired,” says dad. “You need some sleep.”

“You are right,” I say. “Goodbye. Call again soon.”

“Bye, bye,” they say.

My dad is right. I need to go to bed. First of all I will use the space toilet. This is like sitting on a big vacuum cleaner that sucks everything up.

Then I have a wash and clean my teeth. I use soap that doesn’t need water, and I swallow the toothpaste instead of spitting it out so there is nothing to float around the cabin.

My sleeping bag is tied to side of the cabin. It has a hood and arm holes. It is very cosy.

“We are travelling at 25,000 miles an hour,” says MIC. “Everything is ok. Goodnight, Tazz.”

“Goodnight, MIC,” I say.