

# Space exploration essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Space – a new frontier for the expansion of human intellect. To explore the universe and bring back to earth its many wonders is an idea that has been engrained into the very nature of humanity itself. Although it seems a simple idea, to travel into space is an enormous endeavor. It requires a virtually limitless budget and an ethical perspective that deems space exploration admissible. To many, the exploration of the last frontier would be an invaluable human accomplishment. To many others, however, to tamper with the landscape of the contents of the universe would be to destroy the mystery and uniqueness of said wonders. The topic of space exploration is hotly debated. The most important things to consider when developing a viewpoint or opinion on the matter should include the ethics of tampering with nature, the sum of money spent on the necessary equipment, and the overall gain for humanity – Is it really worth it?

Exploration of space would require people to tamper with the environment of their location. Is this ethical? One could argue that people tamper with environments on Earth to fill their desire for knowledge. Why would doing this in space be any different? One could also argue, however, that tampering with things in space is highly unethical. These people would argue that the cliché, “Leave it better than how you found it,” should apply. Space itself is infinite, but its resources are not. They are not expendable. Margaret R. McLean, author of “To Boldly Go: Ethical Considerations for Space Exploration”, states that humans are “Not... owners of the solar system, but... responsible managers of its wonder and beauty” (Source E).

McLean has three principles for space exploration that deal with preservation, conservation, and having an ethical mindset (Source E). These

are, indeed, good things to consider when dealing with this very volatile topic, but there is another side to the debate. Some would argue that the benefits of space exploration could vastly expand the potential of the human race. One could safely presume that very few, if any, of these people are anticipating destroying the universe's environment. They are probably concerned with the issue of conservation, but see the happy medium between the two ideas. There is the potential for a complete shift in the way humans view the world that could be gained from embracing what space has to offer. The only way to see those new ideas become reality is to preserve space and embrace the wonders it has to offer – herein lies the happy medium.

Space exploration is expensive. In 2008, seventeen billion dollars was budgeted for NASA. \$5.3 billion was specifically dedicated to space exploration. This expense accounts for less than 2 cents out of every federal dollar spent (Source C). Although this seems a fairly sizeable amount, one should stop to consider where it goes. This money pays for manufacturing, salaries, insurance companies, research, development, and many other places. It flows through the American economy just like money spent on other government affiliated endeavors (Source A). Space exploration has benefits that extend beyond what one can learn from visiting another planet. The dream of being an astronaut, a physicist, an engineer, a scientist, or any other dream for that matter, can be inspired by space exploration. These dreams inspire the young people of today to work hard and make positive choices (Source A). The thought of understanding the universe can drive one to want knowledge more than almost anything else. When knowledge is

sought after, it is attained. Knowledge can be put to use in many fields and can help many people. Putting the money into space exploration can lead to inspiration. Inspiration leads to discovery. Why not invest in discovery, knowledge, and the well-being of humanity as a whole?

Space exploration can benefit humanity in many different ways and is very well worth putting effort into. As stated previously, it can inspire the youth of today to work hard and dream big. It can also provide new and unheard of substances. Some of the substances could possibly cure cancer or make other effective medicines that society needs. New materials for construction could be discovered making things more efficient and durable. One could even venture to say that our ideas on the formation and workings of the universe, and by extension ourselves, could be drastically altered or completely overhauled! Michael Collins in his book, “Carrying the Fire: An Astronaut’s Journeys”, he states that the political leaders of today could learn a thing or two from looking at Earth from a distance. “The tiny globe would continue to turn, serenely ignoring its subdivisions...” (Source G). Collins makes the point that boundaries would become all but meaningless and that humans are really not as significant as they think that they are (Source G).

“I think that the view from 100, 000 miles could be invaluable in getting people together to work out joint solutions, by causing them to realize that the planet we share unites us in a way far more basic and far more important than differences in skin color or religion or economic system.” ~Michael Collins (Source G)

Space exploration requires many factors to be taken into account. One must consider the ethics, cost, and overall gain of said endeavor. Space exploration is an understandably difficult topic to assign value to considering the unattainability of immediate benefits. But, when putting the facts about space exploration together, one inscrutable truth remains – the cost is minimal, the ethics are agreeable, and the benefits are absolutely invaluable.