

# Artificial satelites essay



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**Artificial Satellites** An artificial satellite is a manufactured object that continuously orbits Earth or some other body in space. Most artificial satellites orbit Earth. People use them to study the universe, help forecast the weather, transfer telephone calls over the oceans, assist in the navigation of ships and aircraft, monitor crops and other resources, and support military activities. Artificial satellites also have orbited the moon, the sun, asteroids, and the planets Venus, Mars, and Jupiter. Such satellites mainly gather information about the bodies they orbit.

Piloted spacecraft in orbit, such as space capsules, space shuttle orbiters, and space stations, are also considered artificial satellites. So, too, are orbiting pieces of “space junk,” such as burned-out rocket boosters and empty fuel tanks that have not fallen to Earth. But this article does not deal with these kinds of artificial satellites. Artificial satellites differ from natural satellites, natural objects that orbit a planet. Earth’s moon is a natural satellite. The Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, in 1957.

Since then, the United States and about 40 other countries have developed, launched, and operated satellites. Today, about 3,000 useful satellites and 6,000 pieces of space junk are orbiting Earth. Artificial satellites are classified according to their mission. There are six main types of artificial satellites: (1) scientific research, (2) weather, (3) communications, (4) navigation, (5) Earth observing, and (6) military. World Book recommends the following format: Oberright, John E. “Satellite, Artificial.” World Book Online Reference Center. 2004. World Book, Inc. <http://www.worldbookonline.com/wb/Article?id=ar492220>.

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