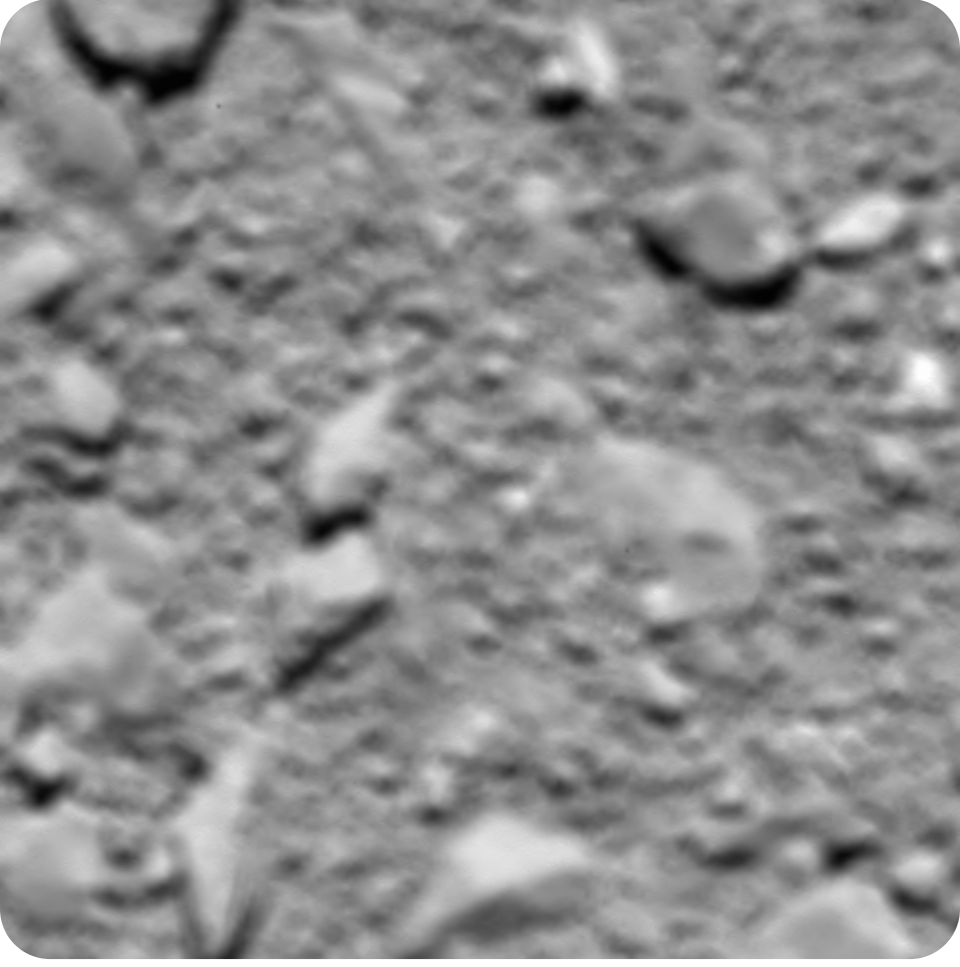


Mission complete, Rosetta!



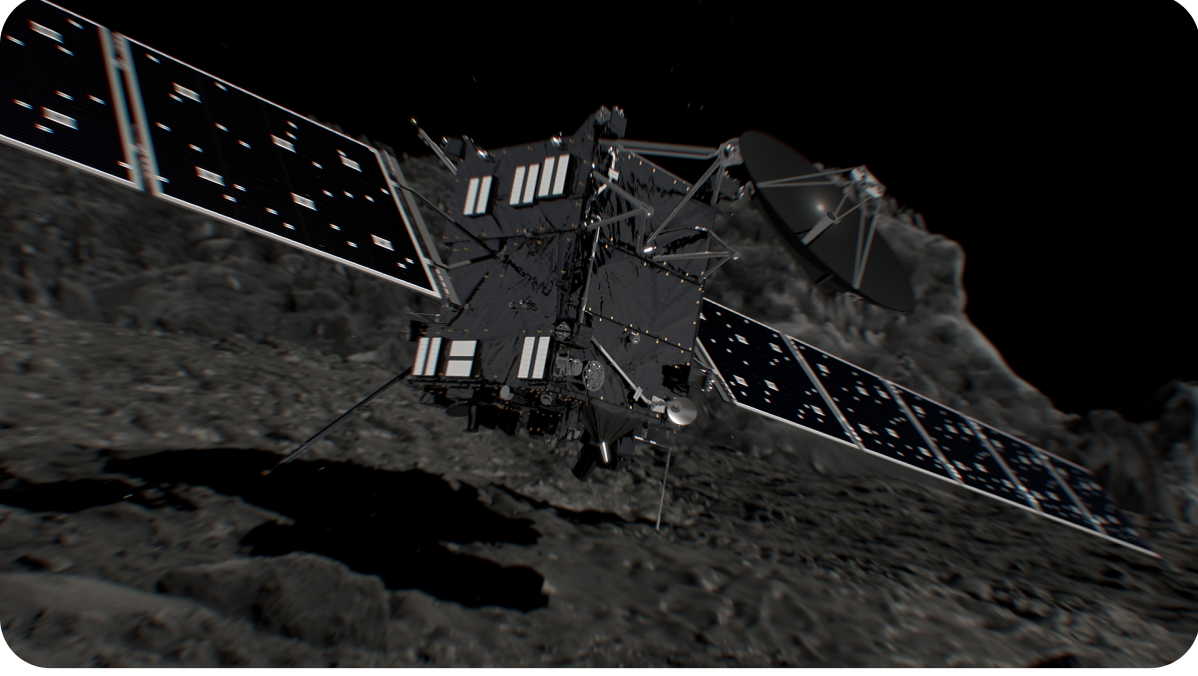
This is the last photo taken by Rosetta, just 20 metres above the comet!

[Access the image](#)

03 October 2016

ESA's incredible Rosetta mission has come to an exciting end with a controlled crash onto the comet it had been studying! The probe's camera kept snapping during the descent, and high-tech sensors studied the comet's gas and dust closer than ever before. The information collected during these final moments was transmitted back to eager scientists on Earth just before Rosetta touched down on the comet's surface.

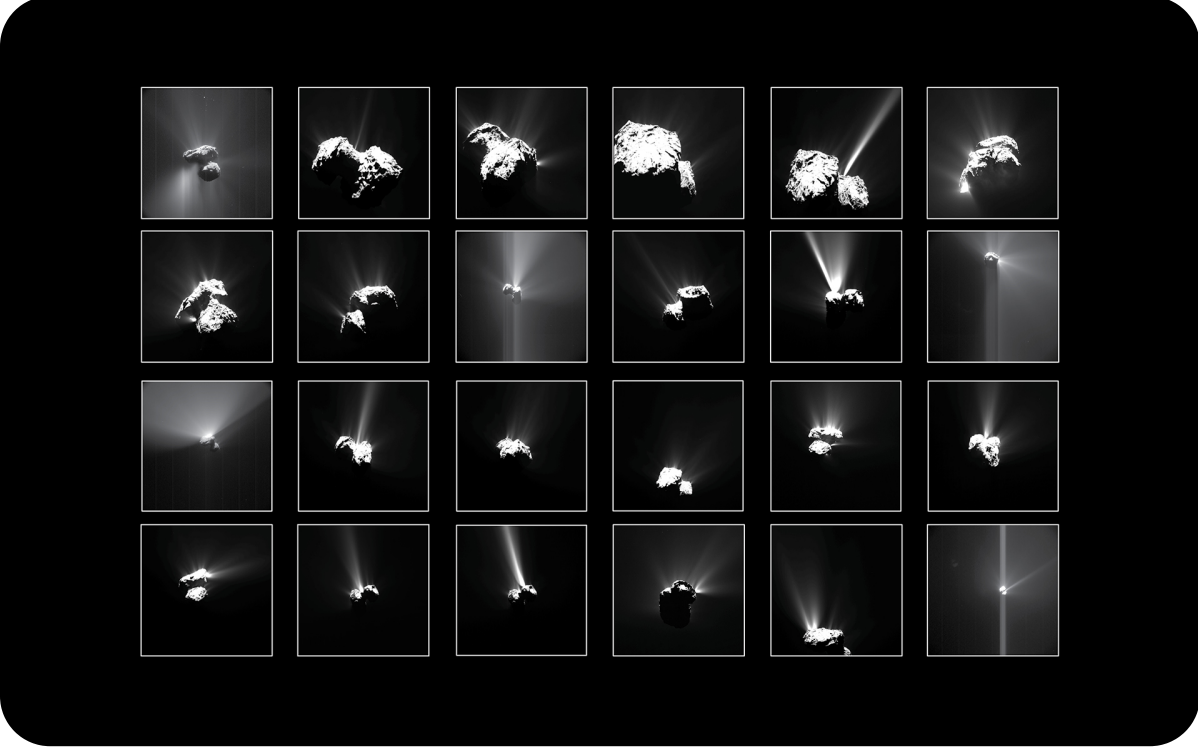
This brings to an end one of the most astonishing probes ever put into space. Rosetta was launched in 2004, and has travelled nearly 8 billion kilometres, including whizzing around the Earth three times, Mars once, and zipping by two asteroids! It became the first spacecraft to ever orbit a comet (officially called Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko), and in November 2014 it successfully deployed a lander, called Philae, onto the comet's surface.



This picture shows what it would have looked like moments before Rosetta hit the comet

[Access the image](#)

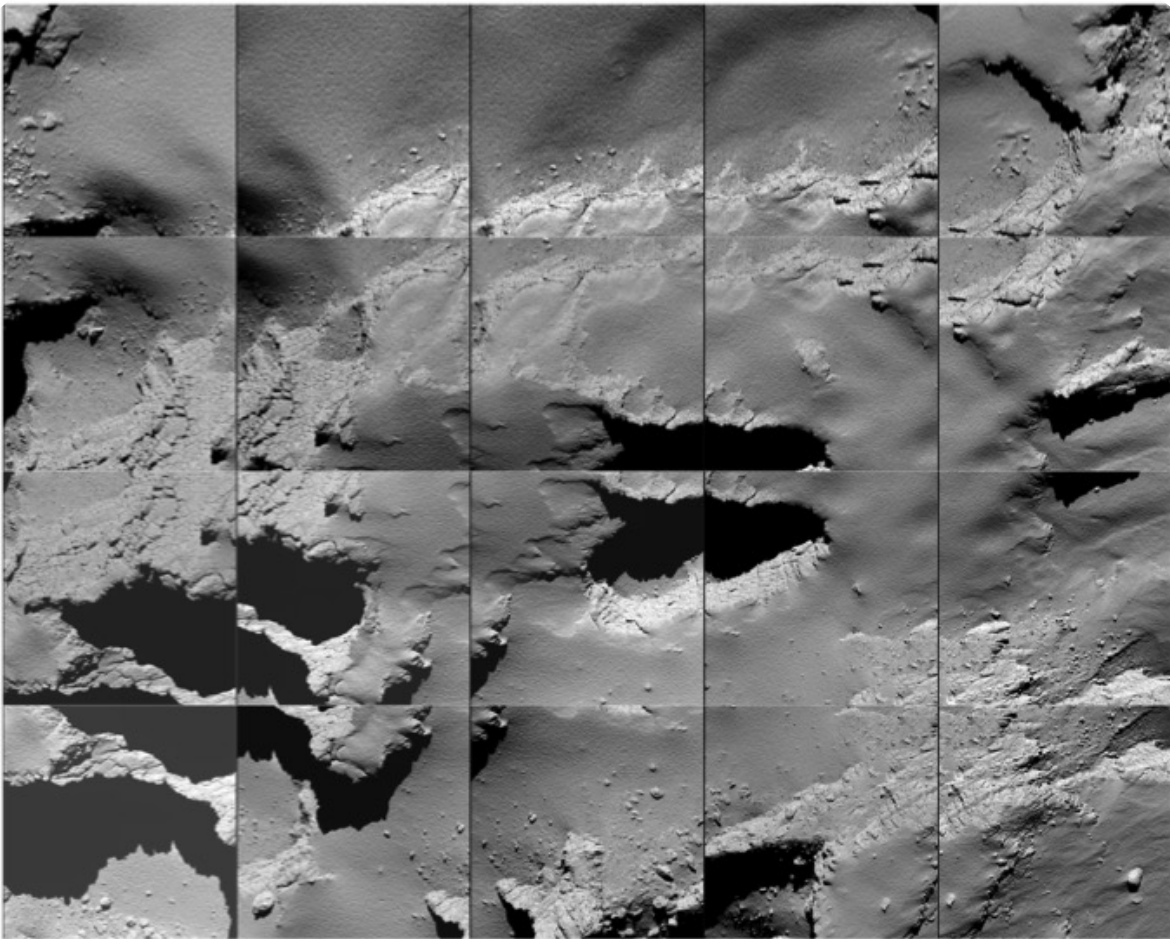
The decision to end the Rosetta mission did not come easily to mission scientists. But the probe is now far out in our Solar System, and getting further away all the time. Soon it will be so far from the Sun that there will be little light to power its solar panels. Ending the mission by crashing Rosetta into the comet meant one more chance to make astounding discoveries!



Rosetta has taken many incredible photos of Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko

[Access the image](#)

Rosetta has already revealed many secrets. It found that the comet has a strange shape, the result of two smaller comets colliding and joining together in the early days of the Solar System. This odd shape gives the comet seasons and affects how dust moves across the comet's surface. Analysing gases coming from the comet have shown that it was made in a very cold region of space. Rosetta even found that comets like 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko may have been capable of bringing some of the ingredients needed for life to start on Earth long ago.



This picture is actually lots of photos put together, a bit like a jig-saw puzzle, taken during Rosetta's final descent

[Access the image](#)

The Rosetta mission has gathered such a huge amount of data about its comet that ESA scientists on Earth will be studying it for many years, making sense of everything that Rosetta seen. Perhaps this is not really the end of the mission, but more like the beginning!

Cool fact: The Rosetta mission was named after the Rosetta Stone – an engraved tablet that helped us understand ancient languages!

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