

Seeing the Earth through different eyes



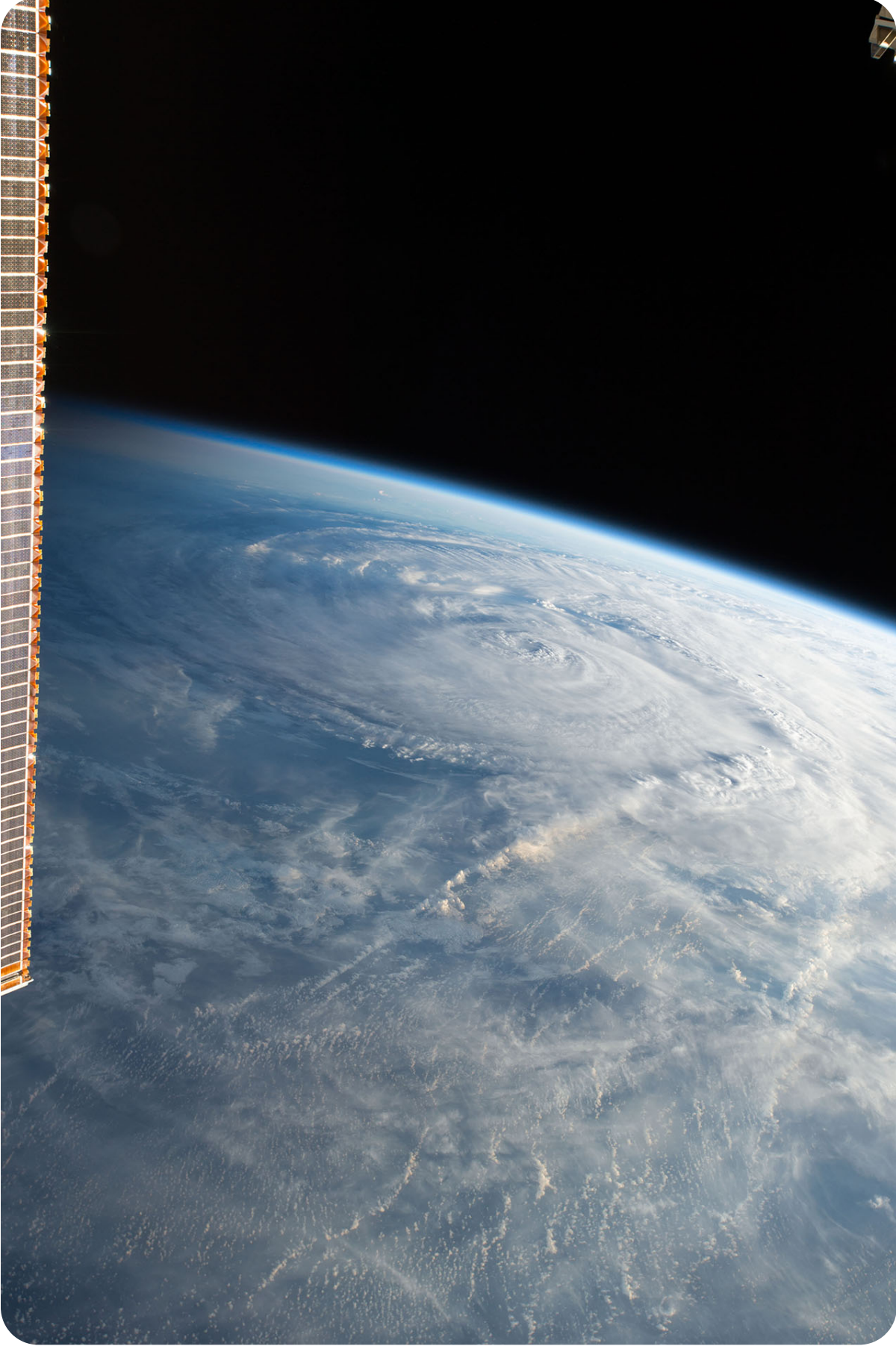
This photo of Earth was taken from the Moon!

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When you go somewhere new and exciting, do you pack a camera? We often like to take pictures to share with our friends and family. Astronauts going into space do the same thing!

In the 1960s, the first space explorers knew it was really important to take their cameras. Photographing Earth from space wasn't just fun for them – it was part of their missions, to share the experience with everyone on our planet. For many people on the ground this was the first time they could see photos of Earth from a completely new perspective!



Hurricane Harvey could be seen easily from the International Space Station

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Nowadays, satellites in orbit around Earth take photographs of the surface that are both beautiful and useful. With hundreds of satellites looking down at our planet we can get many different views. These pictures allow us to track pollution, map forests, check melting ice, record Earth's temperature, and warn people about disasters such as fires, floods, and hurricanes. Satellite photos are vital for seeing how our environment is changing. It is hard to imagine life without them!



Paolo enjoys taking photos from the International Space Station's Cupola

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But what about astronauts in modern times? Do they still pack their camera? ESA astronaut Paolo Nespoli is currently onboard the International Space Station. He explains, “We take many photos to share our experience in space with people on Earth and observe our planet from a unique angle.”

Photos are still a brilliant way to show everyone how incredible Earth is. In fact, astronaut training includes how to use a camera and take good pictures. When on the International Space Station, astronauts often spend some of their spare time in the Cupola, which is like a giant window looking down on Earth. It is the best place to take photos of our planet!



The Cupola as seen from outside

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“I enjoy taking pictures, but it's also fascinating to see the planet's ecological balance, see how we use resources here on Earth and the impact that we humans have,” says Paolo. Many photos taken by astronauts are put on websites and social media, so it is easier than ever before to share their life-changing experiences.

Would you like to go into space and take photos? Would they be your best ever holiday snaps?

Cool fact: You can follow Paolo's adventures on the International Space Station here: paolonespoli.esa.int

For teachers

[From the ground and from the sky - Classroom resource](#)