

## SPOT THE STARLINK SATELLITES TONIGHT!



Have you spotted the streaks of light dashing through the sky at night? They are not aliens or shooting stars, but satellites from Starlink.

Every night this week (until Friday, 24 April), satellites moving across the sky are creating unmissable sights that are fascinating people around the world.

The lights will be visible directly above you as 60 other satellites will be shot into the Earth's orbit.

This is part of American company SpaceX's plan to set up a global constellation of 42,000 satellites which will provide a worldwide broadband service.

### **What is Starlink?**

Each Starlink satellite weighs around 260kg and they were launched NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA, before reaching an altitude of 550km. As their solar panels reflect the sun's rays, the satellites shine brightly in the night sky, creating streaks of light. By the mid-2020s, SpaceX hopes to have 12,000 satellites in orbit, and has submitted plans to launch another 30,000 - there should be plenty more sightings to come.

The aim of the mission: "Starlink will deliver high-speed broadband internet to locations where access has been unreliable, expensive, or completely unavailable." At the end of their life cycle, the satellites disintegrate in the Earth's atmosphere within one to five years - much faster than the hundreds of years normal satellites take.

### **How you can track them**

Use this link to track the satellites progress:

<https://james.darpinian.com/satellites/?special=starlink&fbclid=IwAR3k4X56f8vqg0doe4YsKJqvaOmiA2qSr0xa8y7wj95rY1IFYKEFhEEKxSU#>

**If you want to have some fun, draw a picture of what you saw in the sky and answer the following questions:**

- What exactly is a satellite?
- Can you find out how these satellites will work?