

Hawking's search for alien life 霍金发起寻找外星人计划

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史蒂芬·霍金教授发起了一项新的探索行动，试图回答外星是否有生命存在这个问题。据说这是人类历史上规模最大的外星智慧生命搜索行动。以下是 **Pallab Ghosh** 的报道。

Scientists have been listening out for signals from intelligent civilisations on other worlds for decades, so far with no success. This new **initiative** is the most ambitious yet. It will survey ten times more of the sky than previous programmes. And over the next ten years, radio telescopes will listen out for broadcasts from a million of the stars closest to the Earth.

The scheme has the support of some of the world's leading space researchers, including Professor Stephen Hawking, who says it's now time to answer one of the biggest questions in science:

Professor Stephen Hawking

"Somewhere in the **cosmos**, perhaps, intelligent life may be watching these lights of ours, aware of what they mean. Or do our lights wander a **lifeless** cosmos - **unseen beacons** announcing that here, on one rock, the Universe discovered its existence? There is no bigger question. It's time to commit to finding the answer - to search for life beyond Earth."

Many scientists believe that there's only a small chance of receiving a signal from aliens from outer space. But if we do, we'll know that **humanity** is not alone in the universe.

Questions:

1. Does Stephen Hawking believe alien life will be found?
2. Which two words mean something very similar to 'initiative'?
3. True or false: *This project is the biggest search for aliens so far.*
4. What signs of alien life are scientists looking for?

Vocabulary and definitions:

initiative	倡议
cosmos	宇宙
lifeless	无生命的，死气沉沉的
unseen	未被看到的，看不见的
beacons	(复数) 灯塔
humanity	人类

Answers to the questions:

1. Does Stephen Hawking believe alien life will be found?
Answer: He doesn't say if he believes alien life will be found, but he says it's the biggest question in science.
2. Which two words mean something very similar to 'initiative'?
Answer: 'Programme' and 'scheme' both have similar meanings to 'initiative'.
3. True or false? *This project is the biggest search for aliens so far.*
Answer: True. This is the most ambitious initiative yet, and will survey ten times more of the sky than previous programmes.
4. What signs of alien life are scientists looking for?
Answer: They are using a radio telescope to listen out for broadcasts and/or signals from stars close to Earth.