

SCIENCE NEWS

TOUCHDOWN!

NASA's Perseverance rover has made a spectacular landing on Mars.

There were happy scenes at mission control, in Los Angeles, USA, after the successful touchdown.

Perseverance – or Percy, as some are calling it – is on a mission to find signs of ancient life.

The rover left Earth on 30 July 2020 and has been travelling through space for nearly seven months.

After entering the Martian atmosphere, Perseverance cut itself loose from its parachute and used rocket thrusters to slow down.

Experts at NASA waited nervously during “seven minutes of terror” as it landed. Then, the flight controller announced: “Touchdown confirmed! Perseverance safely on the surface of Mars, ready to begin seeking signs of past life.” NASA scientists erupted with cheers and applause!

The Red Planet robot is the most advanced yet. The rover is packed full of the latest technology including cameras, a large drill and a mini helicopter.

The mission will collect and store a set of rock and soil samples that will hopefully be returned to Earth in the future.

For the first time ever, microphones on board have sent back the sound of wind on Mars!

NASA hopes the mission will provide valuable data for a future trip by astronauts.



Questions on: 'Touchdown!'

1) How long has it taken Perseverance to get to Mars?

2) What is the aim of the mission?

3) Find the nicknames given in the article.

Mars:

Perseverance:

4) Why was the landing “seven minutes of terror” for the NASA experts? You aren’t told the answer, give your own opinion.

5) “NASA scientists erupted with cheers and applause!”
What does ‘erupted’ tell you here?

The experts reacted suddenly and noisily.

The experts were happy and excited.

The experts felt under pressure – a bit like a volcano.

6) List the equipment mentioned that is on board Perseverance.

7) What sound has been sent back to Earth for “the first time ever”?

8) What other sounds do you predict might be heard? What do you think will make the sounds?