

Giant Starship Rocket Makes Its First Trip Around Earth

The empty test flight reached orbit, dropped satellites, and showed engineers what still needs work.



A large rocket launches from a seaside pad with clouds of steam below it.

SpaceX's Starship, the world's biggest **rocket**, went all the way around Earth for the first time, according to BBC Newsround. It lifted off from Texas. Later, it came back down over the ocean.

That first full trip matters because Starship is still being tested. SpaceX hopes this rocket can one day carry people and supplies to the Moon. The company also says it may be used for trips to Mars.

An **orbit** is one loop around a planet or moon. Before this flight, Starship test flights reached space, but they did not make a full loop around Earth. This time, the rocket made two loops. SpaceX had hoped for six loops, but it ended the **mission** early.

No people were on board. That is normal for a test like this. Engineers want to learn how the rocket works before anyone rides it.

Starship has two main parts. The top part is called the Ship. The giant bottom part is the Super Heavy **booster**. A booster is the part that gives a rocket its biggest push at liftoff.

After **launch**, both parts came back toward Earth. The booster splashed down in the Gulf of Mexico. The Ship landed in the Pacific Ocean, then blew up after landing. No one was hurt.

That may sound like a failure. But rocket tests are not like school quizzes, where one wrong answer means a bad score. They are more like trying a hard trick on a bike. Each try can show what to fix next.

BBC climate and science reporter Georgina Rannard said SpaceX would still be very pleased with the day. One reason is that the rocket reached orbit. Another is that it released 26 newer Starlink satellites. A satellite is a machine that travels around Earth or another object in space.

Starship is also important because of how powerful it is. It has 33 engines. BBC Newsround reports that those engines make almost 700 times as much push as a normal jet plane.

SpaceX wants Starship to be **reusable**. Reusable means it can fly, land, and fly again. Most rockets have parts that are used only once. If huge rockets can be used again, future space trips could work more like airplane trips.

For now, Starship is still a test machine. This flight showed it can circle Earth. It also showed that bringing it home safely is still a hard problem.

Written from reporting by BBC Newsround.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Should this test flight be called a success, even though part of the rocket blew up? Defend your answer.

2. If you were leading the next Starship test, what would you want to learn before people ride it?

3. How could reusable rockets change space travel, and what hard problems might still remain?

Giant Starship Rocket Makes Its First Trip Around Earth

B O O S T E R P I N
O O R G R I E R C E
S T G B O N U N R E
I E T M I S S I O N
L A K T E T A I C G
T T M R T K B A K I
O C R T O X L E E N
T O R O A O E O T E
O L A U N C H O M N
O I I O E B S N E N

BOOSTER

ENGINE

LAUNCH

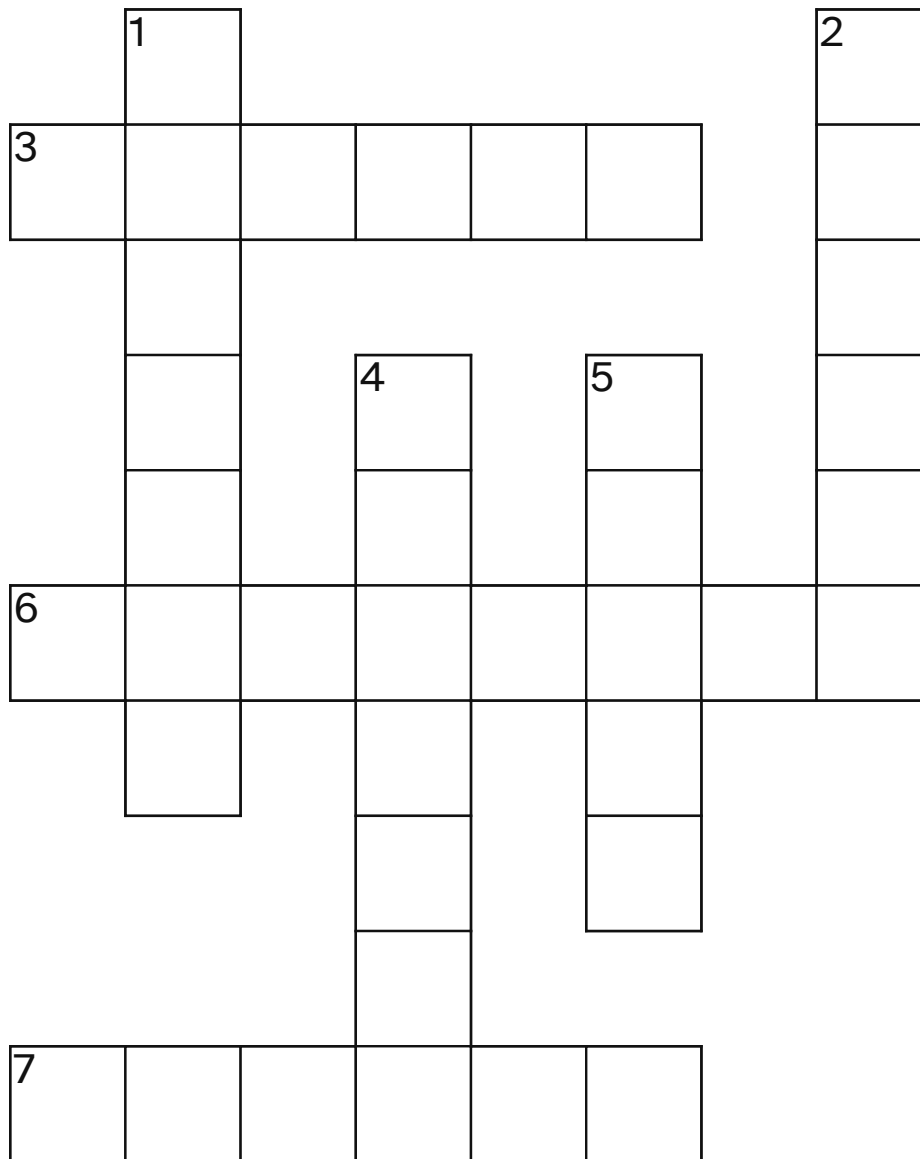
MISSION

ORBIT

REUSABLE

ROCKET

Giant Starship Rocket Makes Its First Trip Around Earth



ACROSS

- 3 Vehicle that zooms into space using powerful engines
- 6 Able to fly, land, and be used again
- 7 Send a spacecraft up from the ground

DOWN

- 1 Large lower section that gives a spacecraft a strong push at liftoff
- 2 Machine part that makes power to move a vehicle
- 4 Planned trip or job with a special purpose
- 5 Looping path around a planet or moon

Where this came from

This article was written for 3andB from the reporting below. It is not a reprint — the wording is ours and the facts are theirs.

BBC Newsround

“SpaceX's Starship rocket orbits Earth for first time”

Published Tuesday, September 29, 2026

Read by us on Tuesday, September 29, 2026

https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/articles/cmkgw7pg0nx2o?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=rss

WHAT IS IN THIS PACKET

The article and its discussion questions, a word search, and a crossword.

COPYING AND REUSE

Free to print, copy and hand out for classroom use. Please keep this page with the packet, so the next teacher can see where the story came from.

More where this came from

If this short lesson worked for your class, our full workbooks go further with the same care:

- Complete units with student and teacher editions
- Worked solutions for every exercise
- Standards-aligned, classroom-tested, print-ready

See the full lessons at 3andB.com