**Voyager 1 Pushes For Deep Space**

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| Voyager impression (Nasa)  Voyager 1 is the most distant human-made object |

**The Voyager 1 probe is getting very close to the edge of the Solar System.**

Launched in 1977, the craft is now some 14 billion km (8.7 billion miles) from the Sun and on the edge of deep space.

American space agency (Nasa) scientists told a conference in New Orleans on Tuesday that Voyager was moving through a region known as the heliosheath.

This is a vast, turbulent expanse where the Sun's influence ends and particles blown off its surface crash into the thin gas that drifts between the stars.

Soon - researchers cannot be sure when - the probe will break into deep space.

"Voyager 1 has entered the final lap on its race to the edge of interstellar space," said Dr Edward Stone, Voyager project scientist at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, US.

Voyager 1 was initially given a mission life of five years but has continued to perform spectacularly.

The craft is carrying a time capsule in the form of a golden gramophone record, complete with stylus, which contains a recording of greetings from Earth in different languages as well as samples of music ranging from Mozart to singer Blind Willie Johnson.

Its twin, Voyager 2, launched a couple of weeks before Voyager 1, is moving on a different trajectory and is some 10.4 billion km (6.5 billion miles) away.

Excerpt taken from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6979696.stm

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**Questions to answer while reading**

1. When was the Voyager 1 probe initially launched?
2. What year is it now?
3. Using your answers from questions 1 and 2, how long has the Voyager 1 probe been traveling through space?
4. How many miles from the Sun is the Voyager 1 probe?
5. What is in the time capsule that the probe is carrying?

**Questions for discussion after reading**

1. How does the probe keep going for such a long period of time; shouldn’t it run out of fuel?
2. When will the probe stop moving?
3. What other types of things on Earth can coast for long distances?
4. Why did NASA put the time capsule in the probe?

**Answer Key - Voyager 1 Pushes For Deep Space**

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**Questions to answer while reading**

1. When was the Voyager 1 probe initially launched? *1977*

2. What year is it now? *2010*

3. Using your answers from questions 1 and 2, how long has the Voyager 1 probe been traveling through space? *33 years*

4. How many miles from the Sun is the Voyager 1 probe? *8.7 billion (8,700,000,000) miles*

5. What is in the time capsule that the probe is carrying? *greetings in many languages, music*

**Questions for discussion after reading**

1. How does the probe keep going for such a long period of time; shouldn’t it run out of fuel? *It is coasting. It has been out of fuel for years now.*

2. When will the probe stop moving? *Only when it hits something or is pulled to another star or planet by their gravity.*

3. What other types of things on Earth can coast for long distances? *Answers vary*: Ice skates, bicycles, pool balls, paper airplanes, birds, etc. All things on Earth are at least running into air that slows them down, and some rub on the ground, which slows them down further. Throw a paper airplane in space and it goes forever since it is hitting absolutely nothing.

4. Why did NASA put the time capsule in the probe? *as a message to other potential intelligent life*