

Does Extra-Terrestrial Life Exist?: A Debate

By: Devastasha Beaver

Introduction

There has been an ongoing debate for centuries about the possibility of the existence of Extra-Terrestrial life. While many experts agree it is a possibility, others argue that the possibility of finding intelligent extraterrestrial life is highly unlikely.

Believers

Renowned physicist Stephen Hawking believes that extra-terrestrial life exists, but warns that people should not be searching for it. According to Jonathan Leake, "Hawking's logic on aliens is, for him, unusually simple. The universe, he points out, has 100 billion galaxies, each containing hundreds of millions of stars. In such a big place, Earth is unlikely to be the only planet where life has evolved" (Leake). However, Hawking believes that if extra-terrestrials are intelligent, they may raid the Earth for anything of value, and leave the human race devastated. He said, "If aliens ever visit us, I think the outcome would be much as when Christopher Columbus first landed in America, which didn't turn out very well for the Native Americans" (Leake). However, Hawking believes that most extra-terrestrial life is microbial and simple.

There is growing evidence to support the theory of the existence extra-terrestrial microbial life, as scientists discover more microbes on Earth that thrive in extremely harsh environments. According to David Shiga, NASA scientists have discovered that it would be possible for such organisms to live on Saturn's moon, Titan. He reported:

Titan is much too cold to support liquid water on its surface, but some scientists have suggested that exotic life-forms could live in the lakes of liquid methane or ethane that dot the moon's surface... such microbes could eke out an exis-