

## The man who fell to Earth

**Level:** Intermediate–advanced

**Timing:** 90 minutes plus

**Summary:** This lesson is about the early ambitions and career of Canadian astronaut, Chris Hadfield. In this lesson, students will:

1. study a text about the astronaut;
2. complete a fact sheet about him;
3. discuss the pros and cons of being an astronaut and also what job they envisaged themselves doing when they were children;
4. watch videos online related to Chris Hadfield.

**Material needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student; one copy of the vocabulary record per student

**Group size:** Any

**Note:** This lesson plan for both pre-experience and in-work business students is based around an original article first published in *Business Spotlight* issue 1/2015.

### Warmer

This warmer aims to introduce the topic of space travel.

### Key words

Students read the definitions and match them to the key words. Then, they should read the article to find the key words and see how they are used in context. The definitions are listed in the order that the words appear in the article.

This task can be divided up between students, one half doing 1 to 12, while the other half do 13 to 24. After they have found the words, they should share their answers with each other.

**Key:**

1. perpetual;
2. copyright;
3. analogy;
4. mission;
5. memoir;
6. graduating;
7. reassuring;
8. phenomenal;
9. unconventional;
10. urge;
11. conversely;
12. paralyze;
13. meticulously;
14. dissect;
15. irrational;
16. simulate;
17. figuring;
18. counsel;
19. overachiever;
20. gaily;
21. scored;
22. regrets;
23. bond;
24. launch

### Extension

Ask students to identify two words from the second section of key words that are used informally in the article.

**Key:**

*figuring; scored*

### Teaching and learning strategy: informal language

Certain words and expressions are only used in informal conversations or writing. Examples from the article are *figure* ('figuring that would improve our chances') when it has the meaning *believe that something is true, although you do not know for certain* and *score* ('scored tickets to the sold-out concert') with the meaning *buy or acquire*. Colloquial words and expressions can cause difficulties for students. They may read them and internalize them, not realizing that they are informal, and then use them inappropriately in their next piece of formal business writing.

The teacher's job is to point out that these words are informal and to stress that you would not normally find such language in a formal article. The teacher should also mention that they are used here as part of direct quotes.

Students may also find it useful to look up the words in a good dictionary. The dictionary will specify that the words are informal and offer synonyms that can be used in their place. See meaning 2 of *figure* here: [http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/figure\\_34](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/figure_34)

### Find the information

Students scan the article to answer the questions.

**Key:**

1. An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth
2. photos from space
3. Space Oddity
4. David Bowie

### Biographical information

Using the information from the article, students complete the table with Chris Hadfield's biographical information.

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### Key:

**Name:** Chris Hadfield  
**Age:** 55 years old  
**Nationality:** Canadian  
**Family status:** married with three adult children  
**Current occupations:** author; speaker; professor of aviation at the University of Waterloo, Ontario  
**Space-related positions held:** astronaut; commander of the ISS; chief capsule communicator; director of operations  
**Earlier occupations:** skiing instructor; fighter and test pilot; exchange officer in the US navy  
**Educational establishment attended:** Royal Roads Military College  
**Academic qualification:** honours degree in mechanical engineering  
**Languages spoken:** English; Russian  
**Early ambition:** to be an astronaut  
**Described as:** everyone's second cousin; a high achiever; extraordinarily brave; highly competitive  
**Most famous for:** singing Space Oddity on the ISS

### Expressions

Students find the expressions and words in the article and match them with the meanings. They should decide which ones they would like to integrate into their active vocabulary and start to do this by using them in sentences of their own.

### Key:

1. went viral; 2. picture; 3. sprang a leak; 4. not to mention;
5. in orbit; 6. illustrated; 7. take them up on it; 8. confess;
9. lined up; 10. show up

### Discussion

To allow students to prepare their answers and ensure a better discussion, ask them to:

- make a list of five good things about being an astronaut and five bad things (for example, good: being able to see the Earth from space; bad: having to be away from home for months on end);
- recall what they wanted to be when they were young, giving reasons for their choice. Did they get their dream job? If not, what prevented them from doing so? Would they still want to do it now? Why / why not?

Students then discuss the questions.

### Webquest

The first link is to the video of Hadfield singing *Space Oddity* on the ISS. The second link takes students to an article that explains why the video may now be legally shown again. The third and fourth links take students, respectively, to a November 2014 interview with Hadfield and his March 2014 TED talk about what he learnt from going blind in space. These links can be given as homework or used to provide some interesting further class discussion.

### Vocabulary record

Here, students should be encouraged to record all of the new and useful vocabulary they have learnt during the lesson, not only in the form presented in the article but also in related forms.

### Related topics on onestopenglish

The following speaking lesson plan is also on the topic of space:

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/skills/speaking/lesson-plans/role-play/exploring-space/550634.article>

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### 1 Warmer

Do you follow space missions in the news? If so, which is your favourite space mission?

### 2 Key words

Match the key words to the definitions. Then, find the key words in the article.

analogy	conversely	copyright	graduating	memoir	mission
paralyze	perpetual	phenomenal	reassuring	unconventional	urge

- continuing all the time \_\_\_\_\_
- the legal right to have control over the work of a writer, artist, musician, etc \_\_\_\_\_
- a comparison between two situations that is intended to show that the two are similar  
\_\_\_\_\_
- a flight into space \_\_\_\_\_
- an account of someone's experiences written by that person \_\_\_\_\_
- completing your studies at a university or college, usually by getting a degree \_\_\_\_\_
- making you feel less worried \_\_\_\_\_
- extremely impressive or surprising \_\_\_\_\_
- different from what most people consider to be usual or normal \_\_\_\_\_
- advise someone very strongly about what action or attitude they should take \_\_\_\_\_
- used for introducing a sentence, or part of a sentence, which says something that is the opposite of the other part \_\_\_\_\_
- make someone temporarily unable to think or behave normally, especially by frightening them  
\_\_\_\_\_

bond	counsel	dissect	figuring	gaily	irrational
launch	meticulously	overachiever	regrets	scored	simulate

- in a very careful and cautious way \_\_\_\_\_
- think about or discuss the details of something in order to understand it completely  
\_\_\_\_\_
- done or happening without clear or sensible reasons \_\_\_\_\_
- produce the features of something in a way that seems real but is not \_\_\_\_\_
- believing that something is true, although you do not know for certain \_\_\_\_\_
- give someone advice and help with their problems \_\_\_\_\_
- someone who tries extremely hard to be successful and puts pressure on themselves to do many things well \_\_\_\_\_
- in a happy and lively way \_\_\_\_\_
- bought; acquired \_\_\_\_\_
- feelings of sadness about something that has happened \_\_\_\_\_
- something that gives people a reason to love one another or feel they have a duty to one another  
\_\_\_\_\_
- go up into space \_\_\_\_\_

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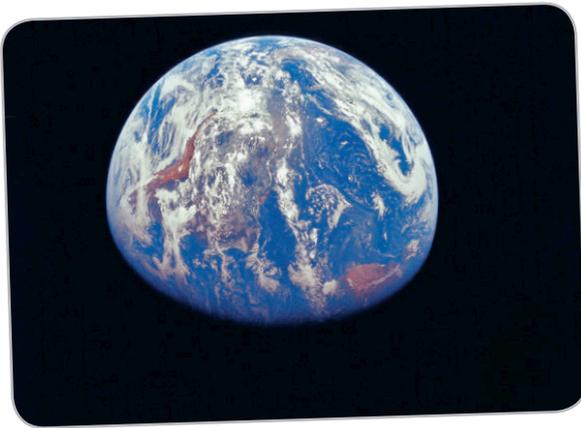
### 3 Find the information

Scan the article to find the answers to the questions.

1. What is the title of Chis Hadfield's bestselling book? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does his second book contain? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the title of the song he performed on the ISS that was posted on YouTube?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who sang the original version of this song? \_\_\_\_\_

### The man who fell to Earth

by Margaret Davis



At the age of nine, he decided he wanted to be an astronaut. Since then, he has been on several space missions. Margaret Davis introduces Chris Hadfield, the first Canadian commander of the International Space Station.

- 1 Chris Hadfield is still surprised how often strangers recognize him. It's like "a perpetual family reunion," the former astronaut told *Maclean's* magazine. "Everybody's a second cousin."
- 2 Well, that's what he gets for playing the guitar and singing David Bowie's *Space Oddity* on the International Space Station (ISS) in March 2013 – and, then, posting a video of the performance on YouTube. The video quickly went viral and was viewed more than 20 million times before it was removed a year later for copyright reasons.
- 3 The family analogy is a good one. With his friendly smile, calm manner and a voice that seems made for singing campfire songs, Hadfield is everybody's favourite brother or cousin. You can picture him at a barbecue, grilling hotdogs

and handing out beer or soft drinks. And he's the man you'd definitely want with you if the canoe sprang a leak.

The 55 year old, the first Canadian commander of the ISS, retired from the Canadian Space Agency shortly after the 2013 mission ended, but he has not stopped working. Since then, Hadfield has produced a bestselling memoir, *An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth*. Another book, of photographs from space, appeared late in 2014. Between books, he has been busy giving talks in North America, Europe, Australia and Asia, not to mention becoming a professor of aviation at the University of Waterloo, in Ontario.

Always a high achiever, Hadfield decided he wanted to be an astronaut at the age of nine, when he watched the first manned moon landing, in 1969. Canada did not even have a space programme at the time; the CSA was established in 1989. An enthusiastic athlete, he taught skiing and ski racing full- and part-time for ten years. Hadfield joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1978, after which he attended the Royal Roads Military College, graduating with an honours degree in mechanical engineering. He was a fighter pilot and test pilot, later serving as an exchange officer with the US Navy. In 1992, he was chosen as one of four new Canadian astronauts – out of 5,330 applicants.

Hadfield spent much of his active career as an astronaut at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. As NASA's chief CapCom (capsule communicator), his was the reassuring voice that astronauts on 25 space-shuttle missions heard while in orbit. From 2001 to 2003, he was director of operations for NASA at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Star City, Russia. Before becoming commander of the ISS, he took part in two other space flights.

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7 Although he was known and respected within his profession, during most of his career, the rest of the world was unaware of Hadfield, who is married and the father of three grown children. That changed during his five months as commander of the ISS, after his son Evan convinced him that social media could be used to build interest in the space programme. Hadfield's spectacular photos, posted on Facebook and Twitter, soon gained a large following. The *Space Oddity* performance was also Evan's idea.

8 "I was like, I've got stuff going on up here. I don't really care about *Space Oddity*," Hadfield told the *Guardian*. "But he was right. The reaction was phenomenal. When I landed, the first human being I met was a search-and-rescue guy I've known for years who reached into the Soyuz and said, 'Chris, I saw your video. It was great.' I just rode a spaceship home from space and that's what you want to comment on?" he laughed.

9 *An Astronaut's Guide to Life on Earth* is a combination memoir and self-help guide. Certainly, there are lots of life experiences to provide material and Hadfield is a great storyteller. But it is the unconventional way he gives advice that makes the book special: "It's puzzling to me that so many self-help gurus urge people to visualize victory, and stop there. Some even insist that, if you wish for good things long enough and hard enough, you'll get them – and, conversely, that, if you focus on the negative, you actually invite bad things to happen," he writes. "Like most astronauts, I'm pretty sure I can deal with what life throws at me, because I've thought about what to do if things go wrong, as well as right. That's the power of negative thinking."

10 Astronauts' jobs are highly dangerous, as illustrated by the fact that they prepare for potential disaster by asking themselves, "What's the next thing that could kill me?" Just thinking about this possibility would paralyze most of us, which is why Hadfield is often asked whether astronauts need to be extraordinarily brave. "It's not like astronauts are braver than other people – we're just meticulously prepared," he told National Public Radio. "We dissect what it is that's going to scare us and what it is that is a threat to us and, then, we practise over and over again so that the natural irrational fear is neutralized."

11 Before a mission, astronauts and their families simulate various emergency situations, including the death of family members while the astronauts are in space. But, in preparing for his own death, Hadfield takes a pragmatic view. "If I die, that's not my concern. I was alive and now I'm dead – so be it," he told the *Guardian*.

12 Learning is a major theme, both in the book and in Hadfield's life. Not only did he become fluent in Russian for his job as NASA's director of operations in Star City; Hadfield and his wife, Helene, took the learning experience one step further. "Instead of moving into one of the American townhouses that NASA built there, we decided to move into a Russian apartment house, figuring that would improve our chances of really getting to know the country and the people," he writes.

13 "Every single thing that you learn really just gives you more comfort," he told the *Guardian*. "It's something I counsel kids all the time: if someone is willing to teach you something for free, take them up on it. Do it. Every single time. All it does is make you more likely to be able to succeed. And it's kind of a nice way to go through life."

14 Being the wife of such a high-powered and frequently absent man can't have been easy but Helene Hadfield, now his manager, is "intimidatingly capable", according to her husband. "A lot of people who meet us remark that it can't be easy being married to a highly driven, take-charge overachiever who views moving house as a sport, and I have to confess that it is not – being married to Helene has at times been difficult for me," he jokes. "Parachute her into any city in the world and, within 24 hours, she'll have lined up an apartment, furnished it with IKEA stuff she gaily assembled herself and scored tickets to the sold-out concert."

15 What about Hadfield's children? He admits that he is highly competitive even with them. "I don't have a lot of regrets in life," he writes, "but one of my biggest is that, when my son Kyle was about ten and was proudly demonstrating how many laps he could swim underwater without a breath, I jumped in the pool and swam one more length than he did. It was an unthinking moment and a great demonstration of the destructive power of competitiveness. I didn't just show up my child; I risked damaging his self-confidence and our bond."

16 Kyle seems to have forgiven him. After the astronauts arrived on the ISS in December 2012, their families, watching from Russia, were given the chance to talk to them in a televised press conference. Thirty-year-old Kyle got the biggest laugh when he took the microphone and said, "Hi, Dad. Great to see you launch. Now can I have a pony?" Hadfield writes, "There was only one possible answer and I gave it: 'Ask your mother.'"

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### 4 Biographical information

Find information in the article to complete Chris Hadfield's biographical information.

Name:	<u>Chris Hadfield</u>
Age:	_____
Nationality:	_____
Family status:	_____
Current occupations:	_____
Space-related positions held:	_____
_____	_____
Earlier occupations:	_____
Educational establishment attended:	_____
Academic qualification:	_____
Languages spoken:	_____
Early ambition:	_____
Described as:	_____
_____	_____
Most famous for:	_____

### 5 Expressions

Find the words and expressions in the article. Then, use them in sentences of your own.

- became very popular and spread very quickly via the internet (2 words, para 2)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- imagine (1 word, para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- cracked so that water could get in (3 words, para 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- used for adding a comment that emphasizes the main idea of what you have already said (3 words, para 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- moving around a larger object in space (2 words, para 6) \_\_\_\_\_
- shown (1 word, para 10) \_\_\_\_\_
- accept their offer (5 words, para 13) \_\_\_\_\_
- admit (1 word, para 14) \_\_\_\_\_
- organized or prepared (2 words, para 14) \_\_\_\_\_
- behave in a way that makes someone who you are with feel embarrassed (2 words, para 15)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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### 6 Discussion

- What do you imagine are the best and the worst things about being an astronaut?
- When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Why?

### 7 Webquest

The video of Hadfield singing Bowie's hit, *Space Oddity*, can now be seen again on YouTube. Watch it and find out how many times it has now been viewed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaOC9danxNo>

Find out why it is now possible to watch the video legally.

<http://mashable.com/2014/11/04/chris-hadfield-space-oddity-back/>

Watch an interview with Chris Hadfield.

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/video/2014/dec/12/chris-hadfield-guardian-live-interview-video?CMP>

Watch Hadfield's May 2014 TED talk on going blind in space.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chris\\_hadfield\\_what\\_i\\_learned\\_from\\_going\\_blind\\_in\\_space](https://www.ted.com/talks/chris_hadfield_what_i_learned_from_going_blind_in_space)

**Note:** David Bowie fans and film buffs will have noted that the title of the article in this lesson plan is also the title of a 1976 film starring David Bowie.

