

If we are going to explore space,
let us reach for the Moon and beyond.



ISS in Low-Earth Orbit

Reaching for the Moon and Beyond

Human space exploration is currently represented by the International Space Station (ISS) in low-Earth orbit. The location of the space station is often misunderstood, so it is illustrated with this graphic. The Earth and Moon in the graphic were captured in NASA image PIA10244. The approximate altitude of the ISS above the Earth's surface is shown. This altitude varies from 173 to 286 miles (278 to 460 km). The ISS is so close to Earth that it constantly loses altitude because of atmospheric drag. Engines on the ISS are episodically fired to repair the orbit. The ISS has flown for over 10 years, beginning in November 1998.