



The big debate

Should the Moon have its own time zone?

With more Moon missions planned, some say a lunar time zone could be helpful.

What you need to know

- Current Moon missions use the time zone of the place they launched from.
- The European Space Agency proposed a lunar time zone in 2023, and NASA (the US space agency) announced in 2024 that it intends to develop Coordinated Lunar Time (CLT).
- NASA plans to use precise atomic clocks, which are also used on Earth, to calculate time on the Moon.
- On the Moon, time moves about 56 microseconds faster every day than it does on Earth.



FACT FILE
North America had more than 144 local time zones until 1883, when railroad companies established four standard ones.

Space agencies and private space companies around the world are undertaking missions to explore the Moon. China, India, and Japan have recently put robotic vehicles on the lunar surface, while NASA sent astronauts around the Moon and back on its Artemis II mission and hopes to put humans on the lunar surface in 2028. Some people say that with so much activity, it could get confusing—and even dangerous—if teams working from different time zones conduct Moon missions at the same time. To avoid this problem, they have called for a specific lunar time zone. But others say that's not a great idea. What do you think? Should the Moon have its own time zone?

Yes—accuracy is important

A day on the Moon is 56 microseconds (one millionth of a second) shorter than a day on Earth. That may not sound like much, but it's enough to affect complex scientific missions that require total precision. If missions are on even slightly different timelines, it puts human lives and spacecraft that cost billions of dollars at risk. Plus, international cooperation is an important aspect of space exploration. A single time zone would encourage all space agencies and companies to communicate and work together. And if we figure out how to set a lunar time zone, we'll know how to do it when we explore Mars and other planets in the future.

No—it's too confusing

Everyone has to agree to use the single time zone in order for it to work, and there's no guarantee that every country, agency, or company would sign on. There have already been multiple lunar missions using different Earth-based time zones, and everything has been fine. There's no real need to create an entirely new time-keeping system that could actually be more confusing. And even with increased lunar exploration in the coming years, it's unlikely that so many missions will happen at once that major problems will occur. Besides, no one is entirely sure how to establish a correct lunar time or whether it will even work.

YES

Three reasons the Moon should have its own time zone

- 1 A new lunar time zone would be more accurate, down to the millisecond, which helps scientists and protects missions.
- 2 One time zone for the Moon would support and promote international cooperation and goodwill.
- 3 It's a step toward setting up time zones for other planets we may explore one day.

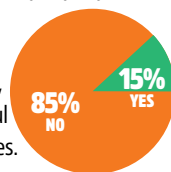
NO

Three reasons the Moon should not have its own time zone

- 1 Even if NASA or another agency created a lunar time zone, there's no guarantee everyone would use it.
- 2 There's no need for it—people have been using different time zones for lunar missions without problems.
- 3 Scientists aren't even sure how a separate time zone on the Moon would work.

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if all zoos should be closed. Your feelings were clear: A majority of you said no, they shouldn't all be shuttered, and a handful of you said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think the Moon should have its own time zone or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.