

# Space Junk

## ABE Level 4

Space junk **orbits** the earth in space. The junk comes from rockets and **satellites** that are no longer useful. Sometimes it falls to Earth. As it falls, it enters Earth's **atmosphere**. It is falling very fast and heats up. The heat begins to melt the **object**. How much is burned up depends on what the object is made of. For example, aluminum melts under a lower **temperature** than stainless steel or iron. Fuel tanks are made of **stainless** steel. They melt more slowly. As they melt, they also break up. More pieces of fuel tanks survive **reentry** than other parts of a rocket. When it hits Earth, debris is going 30 to 300 miles per hour. The lighter the object is, the slower the speed. Heavier objects fall faster. Many of the objects that make it to Earth are larger ones. They don't burn up as easily as small **pieces**.

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