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# Mars Perseverance Rover: How British scientists helped with the mission

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This is an artist's impression of how the rover will be gently lowered on to the surface of Mars

## How are British scientists helping with the latest mission to Mars?

Nasa's [Perseverance Rover](#) is heading to the Red Planet loaded with tools to help scientists learn all about it.

The rover is now on its way after blasting off on a Nasa rocket from Cape Canaveral in the US, and will reach Mars in 2021.

Researchers from Imperial College London and the Natural History Museum will help the mission select the Martian rock and soil samples that will be brought back from Mars as it searches for evidence of old microbial life.

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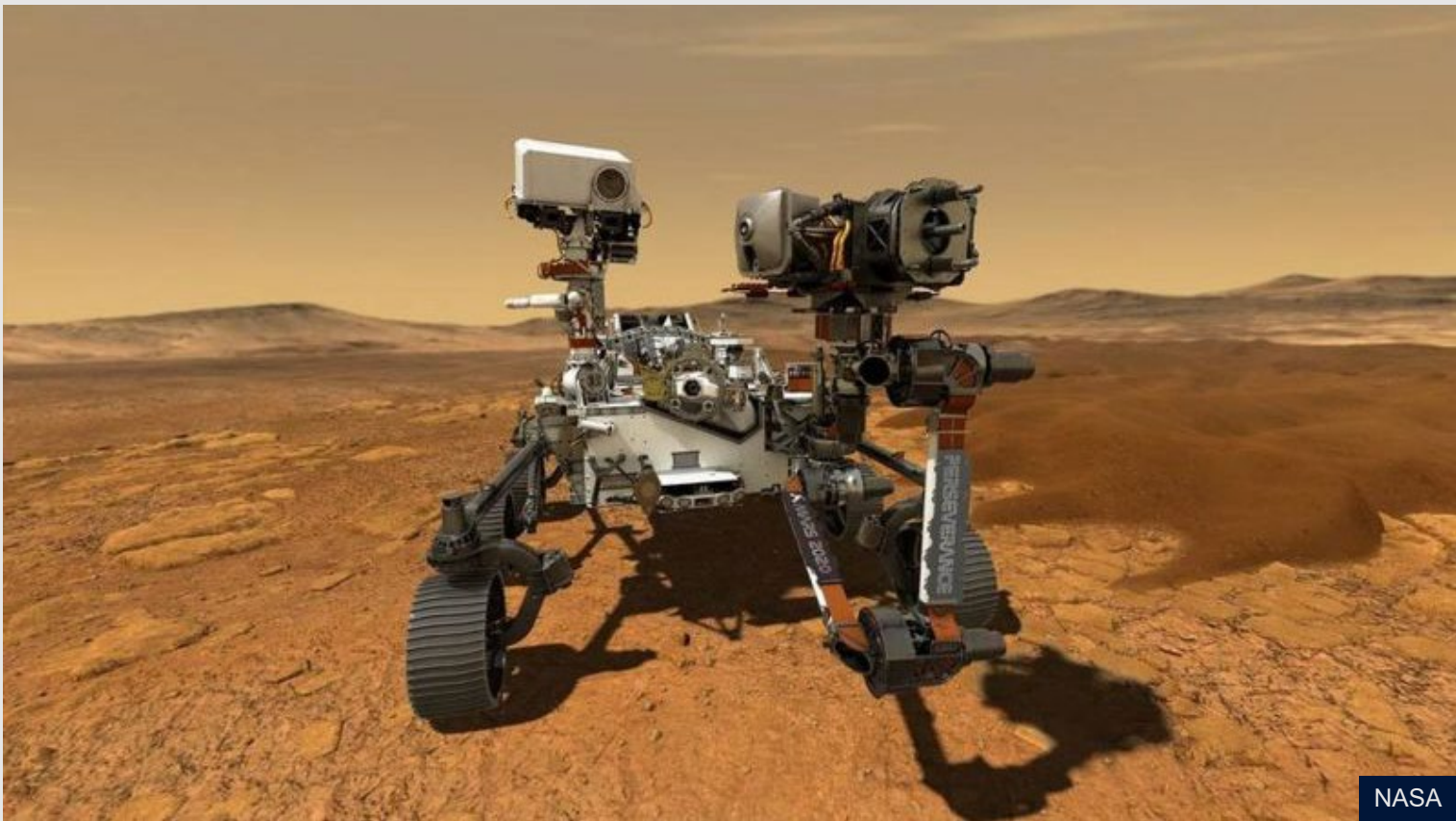
## So how will the scientists help?

Professor Sanjeev Gupta, from Imperial College London, will help Nasa oversee mission operations from a science and engineering point of view.

Another professor, Mark Sephton, will be helping to identify samples of Mars that could contain evidence of past life.

"I hope that the samples we select and return will help current and future generations of scientists answer the question of whether there was ever life on the Red Planet," he said.

"With one carefully chosen sample from Mars, we could discover that the history of life on the Earth is not unique in the Universe."



This is an artist's impression of a rover operating on the surface of Mars

Professor Caroline Smith from London's Natural History museum will be studying the different rocks found in the craters of the Red Planet.

"Knowing as well that this mission is the pioneering step in the planned Mars sample return campaign is the icing on the cake for me," she said.

"I can't wait for the time that these unique samples will one day return to Earth and be available for study by scientists around the world."

The rover is the largest, heaviest, most sophisticated vehicle Nasa has ever sent to Mars.

The mission will last at least one Mars year which is about 687 Earth Days.

The planetary science director at Nasa headquarters said: "We will get closer than ever before to answering some of science's longest-standing question about the Red Planet, including whether life ever arose there."

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