

英国贝尔法斯特女王大学带领的一支国际研究团队认为，由于金星的云层实在太干燥，生命不可能存在于那里。

It's an **audacious** idea: the notion that **microorganisms** could be floating through the atmosphere of Venus. It would be extremely challenging, of course, because we know the planet's clouds are dominated by corrosive sulphuric acid.

微生物可以漂浮在金星的大气层间——这是个大胆的想法。当然，任何潜在的微生物都很难在此存活，因为我们知道该行星云层中的主要成分是腐蚀性硫酸。

But the presence of **phosphine** needs to be explained. This is a gas that on Earth is associated with life – with microbes living in the **guts** of some animals, such as penguins.

但人们需要对金星大气层中为什么存在磷化氢作出解释。在地球上，这种气体与生命息息相关，与某些动物，比如企鹅肠道内的微生物有关。

This new study, however, finds that whatever the source of phosphine, it's highly unlikely to be microorganisms – because there simply isn't enough water in the clouds to support them.

然而，这项新的研究发现，无论磷化氢源自何处，都不太可能是微生物，因为云层中根本没有足够的水来维持它们的生存。

Those who support the theory that tiny life forms may be floating around Venus, say we still don't know enough about the atmosphere to **rule it out**. This knowledge gap could be filled by a **flotilla** of space probes which have just been approved to visit Venus over the course of the next decade.

那些支持微小生命体可能漂浮在金星周围这一理论的人认为，我们对金星大气层的了解还不够，所以不能排除这种可能性。这个知识空白可以由数艘太空探测器的观测结果来填补，这些太空探测器刚刚获准在未来十年里造访金星。

1. 词汇表

audacious	大胆的
microorganisms	微生物
phosphine	磷化氢
guts	肠道
rule out	排除
flotilla	舰队（这里指一组太空探测器）

2. 阅读理解：请在读完上文后，回答下列问题。（答案见下页）

1. Why would it be challenging for the clouds of Venus to support life?
2. What is the gas phosphine associated with on Earth?
3. Why is the phosphine in Venus's atmosphere unlikely to be produced by microorganisms?
4. What are being sent to Venus to answer some of the questions about the atmosphere?

3. 答案

1. Why would it be challenging for the clouds of Venus to support life?

It would be extremely challenging because the planet's clouds are dominated by corrosive sulphuric acid.

2. What is the gas phosphine associated with on Earth?

Phosphine on Earth is associated with life.

3. Why is the phosphine in Venus's atmosphere unlikely to be produced by microorganisms?

Because there simply isn't enough water in the clouds to support them.

4. What are being sent to Venus to answer some of the questions about the atmosphere?

Space probes which have just been approved to visit Venus over the course of the next decade.