

Viewpoint: Why Earth is almost certainly the universe's only example of intelligent life

In [newly published research](#) from Oxford University's Future of Humanity Institute, scientists study the likelihood of key times for evolution of life on Earth and conclude that it would be virtually impossible for that life to evolve the same way somewhere else.

Life has come a very long way in a very short time on Earth, relatively speaking—and scientists say that represents even more improbable luck for intelligent life that is rare to begin with.

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There are countless naturally occurring, but extremely lucky ways in which Earth is special, sheltered, protected, and encouraged to have evolved life.

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In this case, they've used a Bayesian model of factors related to evolutionary transitions, which are the key points where life on Earth has turned from ooze to eukaryotes, for example, and from fission and other asexual reproduction to sexual reproduction, which greatly accelerates the rate of mutation and development of species by mixing DNA as a matter of course.

Most of these "evolutionary transitions" are poorly understood and have not been very well studied by the scientists of likelihoods. And using their model, these scientists say that Earth's series of Goldilocks lottery tickets are more likely to have taken far longer than they really did on Earth.

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