

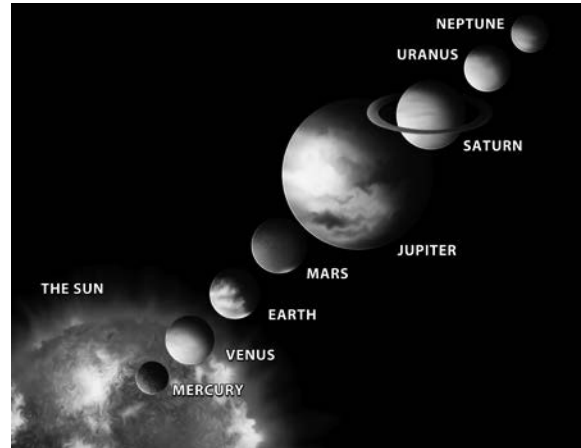
Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Mars: The Red Planet

What is Mars?

Mars is a planet 225 million miles away from Earth. It would take around eight months to travel there in a spaceship. Mars is the second smallest planet in our solar system and the fourth planet from the Sun. Mars has two small moons. No humans have yet been there.



Where did it come from?

Mars formed over 4.6 billion years ago. Scientists think that millions of pieces of rock began to bump into each other and clump together. As Mars grew, a force called gravity pulled more rocks towards it. After 100 000 years, it became the large, red planet we know today.

1 Earth is the third planet from the Sun. Is Mars closer to the Sun, or further away from it?

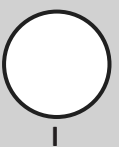
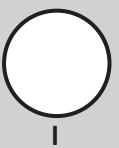
2 Number the sentences below from 1 to 4 to show how Mars was made.

It became the large, red planet we know today.

Millions of pieces of rock began to bump into each other.

Gravity pulled more and more rocks towards it.

The pieces of rock started to clump together.



3

Mars formed over 4.6 billion years ago.

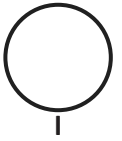
Which of these phrases is closest in meaning to 'formed' in this sentence? Tick **one** box.

was discovered

was invented

took shape

suddenly appeared



Why is Mars red?

The surface of Mars is covered by a layer of dust, which contains lots of particles of rusty iron. You might have seen rust on an old nail or on a bicycle left out in the rain. The rust is red, so Mars looks red.

Is Mars like Earth?

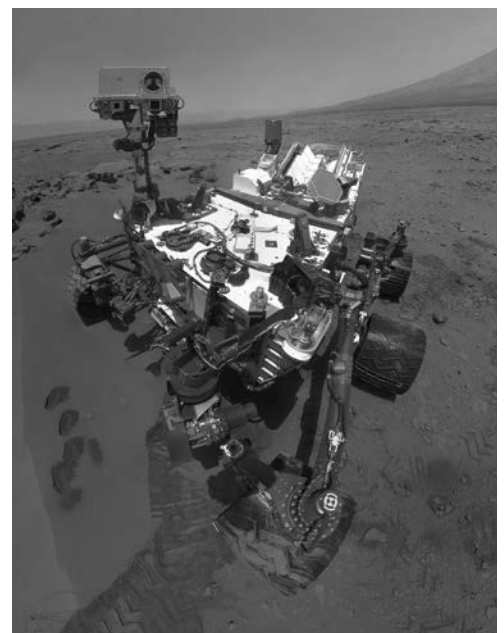
Mars and Earth are very different! They both have craters, ice caps and volcanoes, but the whole of Mars is very cold. It also has no air that people or animals could breathe, and no plants that they could eat.

The tallest volcano on Mars is called Olympus Mons. It is sixteen miles high. That is three times higher than Mount Everest, the tallest mountain on Earth.

The force of gravity is weaker on Mars. Because of this, you could jump three times as high on Mars as you could on Earth!

Is there life on Mars?

Many people used to think so, but no life has ever been found. Through a telescope, it is possible to see long, dark lines of dust that look like canals. Over a hundred years ago, scientists thought these 'canals' might contain water. However, we now know that the only water on Mars is ice. Mars might have been wetter and warmer in the past but it is now very cold and dry.



Will humans ever travel to Mars?

So far, only robot spacecraft have been sent to Mars. Some of the robots look like small cars. These robots are controlled by computers. They do experiments and send the results back to scientists on Earth. However, missions to send humans to Mars are planned to begin by 2025. Perhaps, one day, *you* will walk on the red planet!

4 Explain why Mars is red.

5 Why can you not jump as high on Earth as you could on Mars?

6 Why do you think we know how Mars looks only by looking through a telescope or at photographs taken by robots? Use evidence from the text in your answer.

7 Why do you think the author included the word 'you'? Tick **one** box.

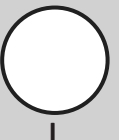
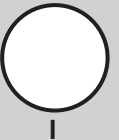
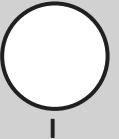
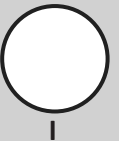
Missions to Mars are planned from 2025.

It is possible that people will be able to walk on Mars.

To interest the reader about the idea of a mission to Mars.

To show that it's not very likely that the reader will go to Mars.

8 Why do you think the author uses sub-headings at the beginning of each section?



9 Draw lines to join the sentence parts and make facts about Mars.

Gravity looks red.
Iron exists only as ice.
Rust is weaker on Mars.
Water on Mars can get rusty.

10 Choose words from the text to complete the facts correctly.

Mars is covered in a layer of _____.
It has no _____ that people or animals could breathe.

11 Look back through the text. Tick the boxes to show for which planet, or planets, each fact is true.

	Earth	Mars
The planet is in our solar system.		
The whole planet is very cold.		
The planet has volcanoes.		
The planet has running water.		

12 What do you think is the purpose of this text? Tick **one** box.

- To persuade children to be scientists
- To explain why Mars is red
- To give information about Mars
- To explain why there are no aliens on Mars

For teacher use

Your mark	_____ out of 15
What went well	
How to improve	

