Astronomy Worksheet: Our Solar System (B1)

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Name: _____ **Class:** _____ **Date:** _____

1. Warm-up (pairs, 3 minutes)

Talk to your partner. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Have you ever looked at the stars at night? Where were you?
2. If you could visit one planet, which would you choose? Why?
3. Would you like to be an astronaut? Why or why not?

2. Vocabulary: match the words to the definitions

Write the correct letter (A–J) next to each word.

Word	Answer	Definition
1. planet		A. a person who travels into space
2. orbit		B. a huge group of billions of stars
3. gravity		C. a vehicle that carries people or satellites into space
4. telescope		D. the force that pulls objects towards each other
5. galaxy		E. a ball of ice and dust with a bright tail
6. comet		F. a big ball of hot gas that makes its own light
7. astronaut		G. an instrument for looking at things that are very far away
8. moon		H. a natural object that travels around a planet
9. rocket		I. a large round object that travels around a star
10. star		J. the path of one object around another in space

3. Reading: Our Home in Space

Read the text. Underline any words you do not know, then try to guess their meaning from the context.

The Solar System is our home in space. At the centre is the Sun, a star that is about 4.6 billion years old. Eight planets travel around it in orbits. The four planets closest to the Sun (Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars) are small and rocky. The four planets further away (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune) are much bigger and are made mostly of gas and ice.

Venus is the hottest planet, with a temperature of about 465°C, because its thick air traps the heat. Mars is cold and red, and it has the biggest volcano in the Solar System, Olympus Mons, which is about two and a half times taller than Mount Everest. Jupiter is the biggest planet of all. You could fit more than 1,000 Earths inside it! Saturn is famous for its beautiful rings, which are made of ice and rock.

Earth is the only planet where we know that life exists. It is in a perfect place: not too hot and not too cold, so water can stay liquid. Light from the Sun takes about eight minutes to reach us. Today, scientists use telescopes and robots to explore the planets, and some companies are planning to send astronauts to Mars in the future.

4. Reading check

A. Write T (true), F (false) or NS (not stated in the text).

1. The Sun is a planet. ____
2. Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars are made mostly of gas. ____
3. Venus is the hottest planet in the Solar System. ____
4. Saturn's rings are made of ice and rock. ____
5. Mars has two small moons. ____
6. Light from the Sun takes about eight minutes to reach Earth. ____

B. Answer the questions in full sentences.

1. Why is Venus so hot?
2. What is special about Olympus Mons?
3. How many Earths could fit inside Jupiter?
4. Why is Earth in "a perfect place" for life?
5. Which fact surprised you most? Why?

5. Language focus: comparing planets

Use the facts in the table.

Planet	Distance from the Sun (million km)	Diameter (km)	Average temperature (°C)
Mercury	58	4,879	167
Venus	108	12,104	464
Earth	150	12,742	15
Mars	228	6,779	-65
Jupiter	778	139,820	-110

A. Complete the sentences with the comparative or superlative form of the adjective in brackets.

1. Mars is _____ (far) from the Sun than Earth.
2. Jupiter is the _____ (big) planet in the table.
3. Venus is _____ (hot) than Earth.
4. Mercury is the _____ (close) planet to the Sun.
5. Jupiter is _____ (cold) than Mars.
6. Mercury is the _____ (small) planet in the table.
7. In my opinion, Saturn is _____ (beautiful) than Jupiter.

B. Write three more true sentences about the planets. Use *than*, *the most* or *the least*.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

6. Speaking challenge: mission to a planet

Work in pairs. You are planning the first human mission to another planet. Agree on your answers, then present your plan to the class in one minute.

1. Which planet will you visit? Why?
2. How long will the journey take, and who will go?

3. What are the biggest dangers?
4. What three things must the astronauts take with them?
5. What will you do when you arrive?

Useful language

- I think we should choose … because …
- It would be more dangerous / interesting / expensive to …
- The biggest problem is …
- We need to take … so that …
- In my opinion, … What do you think?

Answer key (teacher only)

2. Vocabulary: 1 I, 2 J, 3 D, 4 G, 5 B, 6 E, 7 A, 8 H, 9 C, 10 F

4A. True / false / not stated: 1 F, 2 F, 3 T, 4 T, 5 NS, 6 T

4B. Questions (sample answers):

1. Its thick air traps the heat.
2. It is the biggest volcano in the Solar System, about two and a half times taller than Everest.
3. More than 1,000.
4. It is not too hot and not too cold, so water can stay liquid.
5. Open answer.

5A. Comparatives and superlatives: 1 farther / further, 2 biggest, 3 hotter, 4 closest, 5 colder, 6 smallest, 7 more beautiful

5B. Open answer. Check for correct *than*, *the most* and *the least* forms.