



The solar system

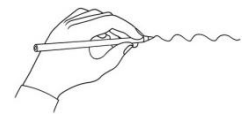
Level 2

Are you interested in space and the solar system? Practise your reading in English with this text.

Reading practice



Preparation



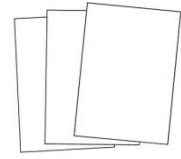
Match the words with the definitions.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| a solar system | → | a natural object which travels around a planet |
| a planet | | to travel around a star or a planet |
| a moon | | a star and the natural objects that move around it |
| an asteroid | | a journey into space, to do a special job |
| a comet | | a big piece of rock that travels around a star |
| to orbit | | not a solid or a liquid |
| gas | | a small frozen ball which sometimes has a bright tail |
| a space mission | | a very big round object that travels around a star |



Reading text

Read the text about the solar system.



Our solar system

Our solar system was formed about 4.5 billion years ago! But what exactly is the solar system? It consists of our sun and eight main planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. There are also moons, dwarf planets, asteroids, comets, rocks and dust.

Planets

All of the planets in the solar system orbit the sun. Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars are called 'terrestrial planets'. They are mostly made of rock and metal. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are called 'gas giants'. They are mostly composed of gas and they have rings. The smallest planet is Mercury and the biggest is Jupiter. Neptune is the coldest and Venus is the hottest planet.



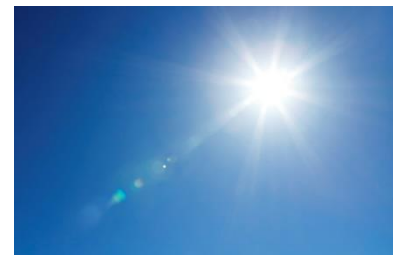
Moons

Moons travel around planets. Earth has got just one moon, but there are at least 150 moons in our solar system. Jupiter and Saturn are the planets with the most – 53 confirmed moons each! Mercury and Venus have no moons at all.



Stars

Stars are enormous balls of very hot gas. Our closest star is the sun, and it's 150 million km away from planet Earth! Without the sun's energy, there would be no life on Earth.



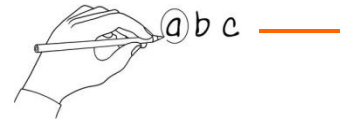
Space missions

Yuri Gagarin became the first human to travel in space in 1961. Then, in 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon as part of the Apollo 11 mission. There have been many more missions to space since!



Did you know ...?

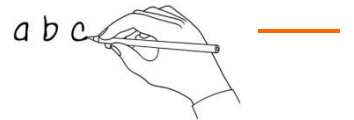
An easy way to remember the order of the planets is to use a special sentence, such as 'My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles'. The first letter of each word is the first letter of each planet. Or you could make up your own sentence!



1. Choose the answer!

Read the question. Circle the correct answer.

- a. How many years ago was the solar system formed? 4.5 million (4.5 billion) 45 billion
- b. What are Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars? terrestrial planets / gas giants / moons
- c. Which planet's the smallest? Venus / Mercury/ Earth
- d. Which planet's the hottest? Mars / Saturn / Venus
- e. How many moons are there in the solar system? at least 50 / at least 100 / at least 150
- f. Which planets have no moons? Mercury and Venus / Saturn and Uranus / Mars and Neptune
- g. Who was the first human to travel in space? Yuri Gagarin / Neil Armstrong / Buzz Aldrin
- h. In what year did Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin land on the moon? 1961 / 1969 / 1989



2. Fill it in!

Complete the sentences.

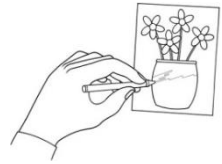
moon	planets	rings	mission	sun	orbit	comets	gas
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- a. There are eight main planets in the solar system.
- b. There are also moons, dwarf planets, asteroids, _____, rocks and dust.
- c. The planets _____ the sun.
- d. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune have got _____.
- e. Earth's got just one _____.
- f. Stars are made of _____.
- g. The _____ is 150 million km away from Earth.
- h. Apollo 11 was a space _____.



Write and draw!

Can you think of another sentence that helps you remember the order of the planets? Draw a picture and write about it!



A large rectangular area with a dotted line for writing and a space for drawing.