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# Exploring Mars

WORKSHEET A

Right now, scientists in the American space agency NASA are carrying out experiments on the planet Mars. They aren't on Mars themselves, of course (although NASA does hope to send astronauts there some time this century): instead they are operating a remote-controlled vehicle called a rover, about the size of a small car, which NASA successfully landed on the planet on 6<sup>th</sup> August. The rover arrived by parachute in an area known as the Gale Crater after dropping from a spacecraft launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida on 26<sup>th</sup> November last year.

Named *Curiosity*, the rover has six wheels and can move around the rocky surface of Mars at speeds of up to 90 metres per hour. It is a mobile scientific laboratory that can carry out many sophisticated experiments, for example using a laser beam to analyse what the rocks on the surface of the planet are made of.

Between experiments the rover finds time to run a Twitter account (@MarsCuriosity) which has more than one million followers. Its excited message on 6<sup>th</sup> August was: 'I'm safely on the surface of Mars. GALE CRATER I AM IN YOU!!!'

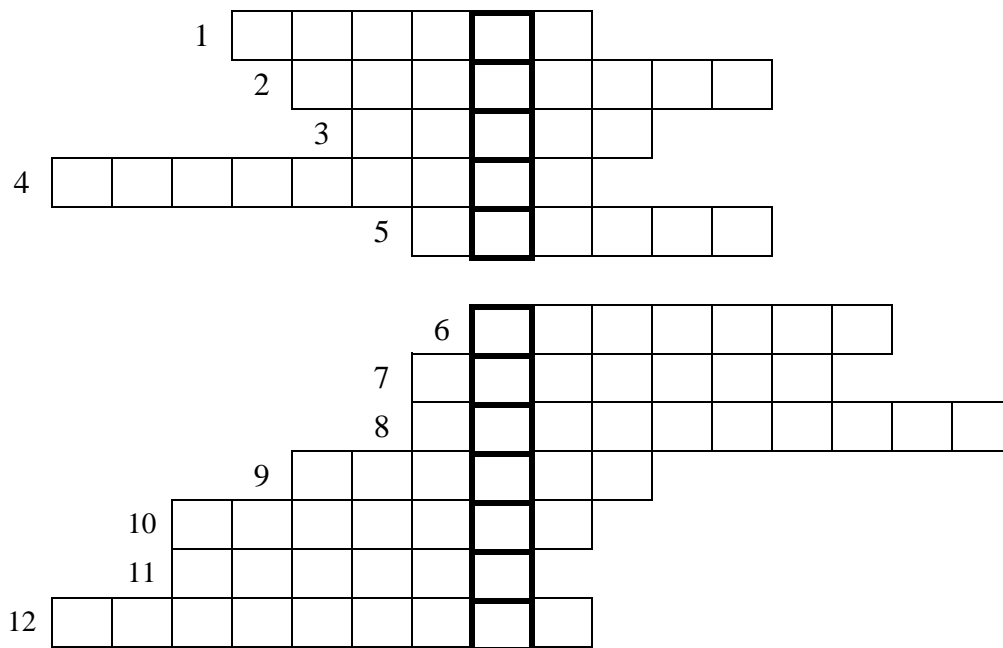
*Curiosity* is not the first NASA vehicle to land successfully on Mars – that was *Viking*, in 1976 – but it is the largest and most advanced. The photographs it will take there should be more detailed than any ever seen before. Its experiments should provide lots of new information about the geology and climate of the planet, and help answer two fascinating questions: has life ever existed on Mars, and could it ever develop there in future?

# Exploring Mars

WORKSHEET B

## Exercise 1

In our solar system Mars is the fourth closest planet to the Sun. If you can complete the crossword below, the names of the two planets on either side of Mars – the third closest to the Sun and the fifth closest – will read from top to bottom.



1. *Curiosity* \_\_\_\_\_ on Mars on 6<sup>th</sup> August this year.
2. It can take \_\_\_\_\_ photographs.
3. It can \_\_\_\_\_ out sophisticated experiments.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ was used to help *Curiosity* land successfully on Mars.
5. *Curiosity* has six \_\_\_\_\_.
6. *Curiosity*'s \_\_\_\_\_ to Mars took more than eight months.
7. *Curiosity* can move slowly across the \_\_\_\_\_ of Mars.
8. NASA launched the \_\_\_\_\_ carrying *Curiosity* in November last year.
9. Unlike most scientific laboratories, *Curiosity* is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. *Curiosity*'s experiments will tell us more about the \_\_\_\_\_ of Mars.
11. It operates by \_\_\_\_\_ control.
12. It has a very large number of \_\_\_\_\_ on Twitter.

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# Exploring Mars

WORKSHEET C

## Exercise 2

The text from Worksheet A has been copied below, but now contains some mistakes. Twelve of the words in bold are incorrect, and four are correct. Decide which are incorrect, and correct them.

Right now, scientists in the American space agency NASA are carrying out experiments on the planet Mars. They aren't on Mars themselves, of course (although NASA does hope to send astronauts there some time this century): instead they are (1) **operating** a (2) **renote**-controlled vehicle called a rover, about the size of a small car, which NASA successfully landed on the planet on 6<sup>th</sup> August. The rover arrived by parachute in an area known as the Gale Crater after dropping from a spacecraft (3) **landed** from Cape Canaveral in Florida (4) **in** 26<sup>th</sup> November last year.

Named *Curiosity*, the rover has six wheels and can move around the rocky surface of Mars at speeds of up to 90 metres (5) **por** hour. It is a mobile scientific (6) **laboratory** that can carry out many (7) **sophisticated** experiments, for example using a laser (8) **bean** to (9) **alanyse** what the rocks on the surface of the planet are made (10) **up**.

Between experiments the rover finds time to run a Twitter account (@MarsCuriosity) which has more than one million followers. Its excited message on 6<sup>th</sup> August was: 'I'm safely on the surface of Mars. GALE CRATER I AM IN YOU!!!'

*Curiosity* is not the first NASA vehicle to land (11) **successful** on Mars – that was *Viking*, in 1976 – but it is the largest and most (12) **avanced**. The photographs it will take there should be more detailed than any ever (13) **saw** before. Its experiments should (14) **provide** lots of new information about the geology and climate of the planet, and help answer two (15) **fascinated** questions: has life ever existed (16) **in** Mars, and could it ever develop there in future?