Mars, the Red Planet

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun, between Earth and Jupiter. It is about half the size of Earth. Mars is called the Red Planet. It is red because of rusty iron in its ground.

Mars is a cold desert. Its average temperature is minus 85 degrees Fahrenheit, far below freezing. Its air is very thin and is made mostly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and argon. People could not breathe it.

Mars has two moons, called Phobos and Deimos. A day on Mars lasts 24.6 hours, a little longer than a day on Earth. A year on Mars is 687 Earth days, almost twice as long as ours.

Mars is the only planet people have sent rovers to. These robots drive around Mars, taking pictures and measurements. Scientists want to find out whether anything ever lived on Mars long ago.

1. **Why is Mars red?**

2. **What are the names of the two moons of Mars?**

3. **Why could people not breathe on Mars?**

4. **If you lived on Mars, would your birthday come more often or less often than on Earth? Why?**

Answer key

Mars, the Red Planet

1. Why is Mars red?
   Because of rusty iron in its ground.

2. What are the names of the two moons of Mars?
   Phobos and Deimos.

3. Why could people not breathe on Mars?
   Its air is very thin and is made mostly of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and argon.

4. If you lived on Mars, would your birthday come more often or less often than on Earth? Why?
   Sample answer: less often, about half as often, because a year on Mars is 687 Earth days, almost twice as long as a year on Earth.