Saturn and Its Rings

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

Name _____ Date _____

Saturn is the sixth planet from the Sun, so its neighbors are Jupiter and Uranus. Like Jupiter, it is a gas giant, made mostly of hydrogen and helium.

Saturn is not the only planet with rings, but it has a lovely set: seven main rings with spaces between them. Each ring is made of groups of tiny ringlets, and the ringlets are made of chunks of ice and rock.

In the 1600s, Galileo Galilei looked at Saturn through a telescope. At first he thought he saw three planets, or a planet with handles. Now we know that the “handles” were Saturn’s rings.

A day on Saturn goes by in just 10.7 hours, but a year there is as long as 29 Earth years. People have known about Saturn since ancient times, because it can be seen without a powerful telescope.

1. **Which two planets are Saturn’s neighbors?**

2. **What are Saturn’s rings made of?**

3. **What did Galileo first think he saw, and what was it really?**

4. **Would you have a birthday more often on Earth or on Saturn? Why?**

Answer key

Saturn and Its Rings

1. Which two planets are Saturn's neighbors?
   Jupiter and Uranus.

2. What are Saturn's rings made of?
   Groups of tiny ringlets, which are made of chunks of ice and rock.

3. What did Galileo first think he saw, and what was it really?
   Three planets, or a planet with handles. The "handles" were Saturn's rings.

4. Would you have a birthday more often on Earth or on Saturn? Why?
   Sample answer: on Earth, because one year on Saturn is as long as 29 Earth years.