The International Space Station

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

Name _____ Date _____

The International Space Station is a large spacecraft in orbit around Earth. It serves as a home where astronauts and cosmonauts live, and it is also a unique science laboratory. Several nations worked together to build and use it.

The station was assembled in space by astronauts, one part at a time. The first piece, a Russian control module called Zarya, was launched in November 1998. A module is one part of a spacecraft that is designed to do a particular task. About two weeks later, the space shuttle Endeavour brought a U.S. part called Unity, and the crew attached it to Zarya. The first crew arrived on Nov. 2, 2000, and people have lived on the station ever since. Construction was completed in 2011.

The station orbits Earth at an average height of about 250 miles. It travels at 17,500 mph, so it circles Earth every 90 minutes. Inside, it has as much room as a six-bedroom house, with six sleeping quarters, two bathrooms and a gym. On Earth, it would weigh almost one million pounds.

Crews on the station do research that could not be done anywhere else. Scientists study what happens to the body when people live in microgravity for a long time. Microgravity is a condition where gravity is so weak that things become weightless. NASA will use these lessons to send people farther into space than ever before.

1. **What two things is the space station?**

2. **What does “module” mean, and which words help you tell?**

3. **Tell in order how the station was built and when people moved in.**

4. **Would you like to live on the space station for a few months? Give a reason from the passage.**

Answer key

The International Space Station

1. What two things is the space station?
   A home where astronauts and cosmonauts live, and a science laboratory.

2. What does “module” mean, and which words help you tell?
   One part of a spacecraft that is designed to do a particular task. The next sentence explains it, and Unity is another part that was attached.

3. Tell in order how the station was built and when people moved in.
   Zarya was launched in November 1998. About two weeks later, Endeavour brought Unity, and the crew attached it to Zarya. The first crew arrived on Nov. 2, 2000, and construction was completed in 2011.

4. Would you like to live on the space station for a few months? Give a reason from the passage.
   Sample answer: yes, because I could circle Earth every 90 minutes and help with research that could not be done anywhere else. But it might feel crowded, with a whole crew sharing two bathrooms.