

Venus, the Hottest Planet



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

Name _____ Date _____

Venus is the second planet from the Sun, between Mercury and Earth. It is a rocky planet, almost as big as Earth.

Venus is not the closest planet to the Sun, but it is the hottest. Its thick atmosphere is full of carbon dioxide, a gas that traps heat, and its clouds are made of sulfuric acid. It is so hot there that lead would melt into puddles.

Venus spins very slowly, and the opposite way from Earth and most other planets. One spin takes about 243 Earth days, but a trip around the Sun takes only 225. So a day on Venus is longer than its year! And because it spins backward, the Sun rises in the west.

Like Mercury, Venus has no moons. It is easy to see in the sky without a telescope, so people have known it since ancient times. The Magellan spacecraft used radar to see the ground hidden under its clouds.

1. What is Venus's thick atmosphere full of?

2. On Venus, where does the Sun rise?

3. Mercury is closer to the Sun. Why is Venus hotter?

4. A day on Venus is longer than its year. How can that be?

Answer key

Venus, the Hottest Planet

1. What is Venus's thick atmosphere full of?
Carbon dioxide, a gas that traps heat.
2. On Venus, where does the Sun rise?
In the west.
3. Mercury is closer to the Sun. Why is Venus hotter?
Because its thick atmosphere of carbon dioxide traps the heat.
4. A day on Venus is longer than its year. How can that be?
Sample answer: Venus spins so slowly that one turn takes about 243 Earth days, but it goes around the Sun in only 225, so it finishes its trip around the Sun before it has spun around once.