
Our Solar System

Reading Comprehension

The Asteroid Belt

An asteroid is a piece of rock. Some parts of an asteroid are made of nickel and iron. Many people believe that asteroids are what was left over after the planets were formed in our solar system.

Asteroids orbit the Sun. Most of the asteroids in our solar system are orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. This area is known as the asteroid belt. It is named this because it looks like there is a belt made up of rocks around the Sun. Sometimes asteroids crash into one another. This can break them into smaller pieces and change their course.

Some scientists believe that asteroids were part of another planet that never formed in our solar system. Some scientists also call asteroids "minor planets". It is believed that if all of the asteroids were pulled together to form a planet, it would not be much bigger than Earth's moon.

If an asteroid gets pulled into the gravitational field of a planet, it would orbit that planet just like a moon would. There have been times when an asteroid has been pulled into Earth's gravitational field and crashed into Earth, but this is very rare.

Story Questions:

1. Why does the author say that an asteroid hitting Earth is rare?
 - a. It happens very often.
 - b. It can cause a lot of damage.
 - c. It doesn't happen very often.
 - d. It always lands in the ocean.

2. The third paragraph is about...
 - a. what the asteroid belt is made of.
 - b. the distance between Mars and Jupiter.
 - c. what happens when an asteroid gets pulled into a planet's gravitational field.
 - d. why asteroids are called "minor planets".

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3. What is the meaning of *minor* as used in the term "minor planets"?
 - a. smaller or lesser
 - b. interval
 - c. scale
 - d. key
 4. Asteroids are mostly made up of...
 - a. planets.
 - b. stars.
 - c. air.
 - d. rock.

Journal Writing

5. What if all of the asteroids in the asteroid belt merged together to form a new planet? What would this planet look like? Do you think we could live there? **Explain** in a 5–7 sentence paragraph.

Math Worksheet

6. Practise [making fractions equivalent](#).

Word Problems

7. **Read** the word problems below and **write** the answers.
 - ★ The children went to a birthday party at Planet Pizza. At the party, Jackie ate $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pizza. Elle ate $\frac{1}{3}$ of a pizza. Edgar ate $\frac{3}{6}$ of a pizza. Rick ate $\frac{4}{8}$ of a pizza. Carl ate $\frac{5}{8}$ of a pizza. Which children ate the same amount of pizza as Jackie?
 - ★ Jon finished reading $\frac{3}{4}$ of the book, *The Creation of the Asteroid Belt*. Pat completed $\frac{7}{8}$ of the same book. Who completed more of the book? How much more did that person read?

Fun Stuff!

8. **Track** the phases of the moon each night by using this [journal](#).