

X. Choose the correct answers to complete the passage.

THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

The International Space Station (ISS) is the largest structure humans have ever put into space. This gigantic satellite is used both as a laboratory for new technologies and an observation platform for astronomical, environmental and geological research. It is a permanently occupied outpost in outer space and it is considered to be an important stepping-stone for further space exploration.

The space station flies at an average altitude of 400 kilometers above the Earth and it circles the globe every 90 minutes at a speed of about 28,000 kilometers per hour, which means that in just one day, the station travels about the distance it would take from Earth to the moon and back. It also means that astronauts on board the ISS get to see a sunrise every one and a half hour.

Five different space agencies representing 15 countries built the International Space Station for no less than 100 billion dollars. The primary partners on the project are NASA, Russia's Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities, the European Space Agency, the Canadian Space Agency and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

The International Space Station was taken into space piece-by-piece, which means that consists of modules and connecting nodes that contain living quarters and laboratories powered by solar panels. The first module, the Russia Zarya, was launched in 1998. Since then, a number of different modules have been added, extending the ISS one piece at a time. The space station spans the area of a U.S. football field, and weighs 391,000 kilograms. The complex now has more living space than a conventional five-bedroom house, and has two bathrooms and gym facilities and a 360-degree bay window. Astronauts have also compared the space station's living space to the cabin of a Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

A. Decide whether the following sentences are true (T) or false (F)

1. The ISS is a habitable artificial satellite that is placed into orbit.
2. Once on the ISS, scientists can make astronomical observations.
3. The ISS's low Earth orbit is about 400 kilometers above sea level.
4. It takes 45 minutes for the ISS to make one complete turn around the Earth.
5. The ISS includes contributions from 15 nations.
6. Approximately 100 billion dollars were spent for the construction of the ISS.
7. The ISS was built on the ground and then launched into space in one go.
8. The ISS covers an area as big as a football field and weighs almost 400 tonnes.

B. Choose the correct answer.

1. What does the passage mainly discuss?
 - a. The functions of the ISS
 - b. The launch and structure of the ISS
 - c. The origin of the ISS
 - d. General information about the ISS
2. In one day the station travels _____.
 - a. approximately the distance it would take from Earth to the moon
 - b. twice the distance it would take from Earth to the moon
 - c. exactly the distance it would take from Earth to the moon
 - d. less than the distance it would take from Earth to the moon

3. What does the phrase “stepping-stone” in the first paragraph mean?

- a. piece of rock
- b. way of success
- c. means of progress
- d. step forward

4. According to the passage, the International Space Station _____.

- a. is a joint project between five participating space agencies
- b. is worth less than \$100 billion
- c. was built by astronauts from 15 different countries
- d. is primarily operated by the United States (NASA)

5. All the following statements are true EXCEPT _____.

- a. The ISS was constructed and assembled module by module.
- b. The construction of the ISS was started in 1998.
- c. The ISS has the volume of a five-bedroom house.
- d. The ISS is around the size of a Boeing 747 plane.