

Name _____ Date _____

Adapted from *Our Very Own Star: The Sun**Courtesy of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)*

When you look at the night sky filled with stars, have you ever wondered what a star is?

Walk outside on a clear day and say, "Hello!" to our very own star—the sun! (But don't ever look directly at the sun. You may harm your eyes.)

The sun seems small when we look at it because it is very far away. The sun is 93 million miles from Earth! If somehow you could fly an airplane to the sun, it would take you 26 years. How old would you be when you got to the sun? How old would you be when you got back?

What do we get from the sun? The sun gives us heat and light necessary for us to live. Without the sun, Earth would be a frozen ball of ice.

The sun is a very big ball of hot gases. The flame of a candle is also hot gases. If you look closely at the candle, you can see brighter and darker spots in the flame. The hot gases of the sun also show darker and lighter spots, and the gases move and flow.

The dark spots on the sun are large storms called sunspots. They look small on the sun but are, in fact, as large as Earth or bigger. Can you imagine a storm as big as Earth?

There are also huge explosions called solar flares in which the hot gases are spit away from the sun—like spaghetti sauce that bubbles and spatters. These great storms blast material out of the sun and into space.

Tiny particles¹ that scientists call matter are always leaving the sun. It is somewhat like the wind blowing. In fact, this stream of tiny particles is called solar wind. It takes one to five days for this wind to reach Earth. Sometimes the solar wind causes beautiful lights in the night sky, called auroras. These lights look like moving sheets of colors high in the sky.

Sometimes the solar winds can disrupt² electricity, telephones, televisions, and radios. This can be very dangerous for police, firefighters, airplanes, and ships at sea.

¹**particles:** tiny bits

²**disrupt:** stop

The sun is important to us because we need its warmth and light. Scientists also study the sun to learn more about Earth's weather and climate. NASA helps us to learn more about the sun by sending satellites into space to study the space weather. Perhaps one day you can work for NASA, too!

The sun—our very own star. It lights the daytime sky and gives us warmth just as the nighttime stars give the sky a special beauty.

- 1 Why should people not look directly at the sun?
 - A The sun could harm their eyes.
 - B The sun is too bright to look at without sunglasses.
 - C The sun is so far away, looking at it could hurt their necks.
 - D The sun has dangerous gases that will make people sick.

- 2 According to the text, why does the sun look so small in the sky?
 - A It has storms on its surface.
 - B It is the same size as Earth.
 - C It contains many small stars.
 - D It is very far away from Earth.

- 3 According to the text, what is the sun made of?
 - A dark spots
 - B hot gases
 - C rock and ice
 - D lava and dirt

- 4 According to the text, what would happen to Earth without the sun?
- A Earth would freeze into a ball of ice.
 - B Earth would become a black star.
 - C The water on Earth would disappear.
 - D The land on Earth would melt.
- 5 According to the text, why do scientists study the sun?
- A to learn more about life on other planets
 - B to learn more about the dark spots in a candle
 - C to learn more about Earth's weather and climate
 - D to learn more about how life would be on a frozen Earth