



1. Complete the sentences with:

planets moons comet galaxy solar system satellite

- All the _____ in our _____ are 4.5 billion years old.
- Jupiter has 63 _____. The largest, Ganymede, is bigger than Mercury.
- The stars in the Milky Way, the _____ to which the sun belongs, number in hundreds of billions.
- The gas tail of a _____ always points away from the sun.
- The first communications _____ orbited the earth every 2 hours and 37 minutes.

2. Read and match each sentence (A-H) to a gap (1-7).

There is one extra sentence you do not need to use.

Is There Anybody Out There?

Have you ever read a story about someone who says they have been abducted by aliens? Or perhaps they claim to have seen a UFO? Most people don't take these tales seriously but let's face it... most of us have at some point found ourselves gazing up into the starry night sky, wondering if we are alone in the universe or not. **A** _____. They point out this: there are more stars in the cosmos than grains of sand on all the beaches of the world. They are convinced that ET¹ and his friends are indeed out there and if so, they are determined to establish contact!

In the 1960s, astronomers of the Search for Extraterrestrial¹ Intelligence (SETI) programme began their high-tech hunt to extraterrestrial life that continues to this day. The scientists listen to radio waves by sweeping the skies with huge radio telescopes such as 'Arecibo' in Puerto Rico, **B** _____. The searches are based on the hypothesis that aliens may be intentionally sending communication signals out across the universe, or that signals from their worlds could be escaping into space - just as our own radio, television and military broadcast signals escape into the cosmos.

Unfortunately, the scientists may have to face, the fact that the possibility of finding what they are looking for is very small. For a start, even if these 'alien civilisations' do exist, they might not be technologically advanced enough to communicate over long distances. **C** _____. Also, with a hundred billion stars in our galaxy alone, and a billion possible radio channels to choose from, it might take a very long time for us to tune into ET! So, why don't we send our own messages instead? **D** _____. Even if the nearest civilisation was as close as 500 light-years away, we would have to surround for 1000 years waiting for a reply! All the same, in 1974, we did broadcast a radio message containing basic information about the human race. **E** _____. If there is intelligent life there, we will hear from them around the year 52,000!

So, how do you fancy joining in the search for intelligent life yourself? Well, the 'SETI@home' project allows you to do exactly that. After downloading a clever screensaver, your computer will analyse unknown or unusual signals from radio telescopes whenever you are not using it. **F** _____. So far, however, ET is not "phoning home"!

So where do we go from here? Well, despite the fact that we have not yet found a shred of convincing evidence that alien life exists, one thing is for sure - the search will go on! But perhaps we're forgetting one important thing. **G** _____. Only time, perhaps thousands of years, will tell! ² the distance light travels in a year, will tell!

¹ **extra-terrestrial: name given to alien being**

- Millions of people in over 200 countries have already taken part.
- If they don't have radio, SETI won't find them!
- We want to talk to the aliens all right, but do the aliens want to talk to us?
- The fact that we have found nothing after decades of looking is pretty discouraging.
- They also comb the skies looking for flashes of laser light alien civilisations might be beaming across space.
- Well, simply because it's just not that interesting for us.
- It was directed to a group of stars in our galaxy 25,000 light years away.
- But for some people, wondering is just not enough.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G