Mercury and Venus

Planets in our solar system orbit the sun. Earth is the third planet away from the sun. There are two planets between Earth and the sun. The one closest to the sun is called Mercury. Venus is the planet between Mercury and Earth.

It is hard to see Mercury from Earth. You need a telescope in order to do it. Mercury is one third the size of Earth. It is the smallest planet in the solar system. Mercury moves fast, about thirty-one miles a second. It takes just eighty-eight days to orbit the sun. But Mercury rotates slowly, just once about every fifty-eight days. The ground on Mercury is rocky. It has craters. One of those craters is about eight hundred miles long! Mercury has long cliffs called scarps. Scarps were formed when the core of the planet shrank.

Venus is a planet we can see from Earth. Sunlight shines off its clouds and makes it visible at night. Venus is sometimes called Earth’s twin. They are almost the same size. They are made of the same things. They both have very few craters.

In most ways, Venus is not like Earth. Earth and Venus spin in different directions. A day on Venus is longer that its year! Its rotation is slow. It takes 243 days to rotate once, while Earth only takes 24 hours. Venus is very hot, about 900 degrees Fahrenheit. Venus has many volcanoes. It is too hot to have any oceans.

1. What are two ways that Earth is different from Mercury? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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2. What are two ways that Earth is different from Venus? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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3. What is one way that Venus is similar to Mercury? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is a scarp? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_