

**Grade 8**  
**Reading - Science Fiction**

**The Solar Voyage**

In the year 2145, humanity had spread its wings across the solar system. The technological advances over the past century had made it possible to travel from Earth to the farthest planet in a matter of days. But for young Tara, space travel was more than just moving from one point to another. For her, it was a journey into the mysteries of the universe.

Tara lived on Mars, in a sprawling city beneath the planet's surface. Mars had been terraformed decades ago, allowing humans to breathe and live comfortably, but most of the city structures were built underground to protect against the occasional sandstorms. Tara's family had been one of the early settlers, and she had heard tales of the brave voyages her ancestors had undertaken to reach this red planet.

One day, Tara received a message from her friend, Len, who lived on Jupiter's moon, Europa. "We've found something strange beneath the icy surface," the message read. Intrigued, Tara decided to visit Europa.

She boarded the solar cruiser, a sleek spaceship powered by the sun's energy. As they traveled, Tara peered out of the window, watching the stars and planets. The ship passed by the massive Jupiter, with its gigantic storm that had raged for centuries. Soon, Europa came into view. It was a beautiful moon with an icy surface and vast oceans beneath.

Once Tara landed, Len took her to the site where they had made the discovery. Beneath the ice, they found ancient ruins, suggesting a civilization that had lived on Europa long before humans had even thought of exploring space. The two friends were astonished. "Could there have been life here?" Tara wondered aloud.

The discovery prompted a series of expeditions to Europa. Scientists from all over the solar system flocked to uncover the secrets of this lost civilization. The findings indicated that the beings that

had lived on Europa had been advanced, with technology that was, in some respects, superior to humanity's.

As Tara returned to Mars, she realized that the universe was full of mysteries. She hoped that humanity would always retain its sense of wonder and the desire to explore the unknown.

Questions:

1. In what year does the story take place?
  - A. 2020
  - B. 2045
  - C. 2145
  - D. 2245
  
2. Where did Tara live?
  - A. Earth
  - B. Jupiter
  - C. Europa
  - D. Mars
  
3. Why were most city structures on Mars built underground?
  - A. To maintain secrecy.
  - B. To protect against sandstorms.
  - C. To keep the city cool.
  - D. Because of a lack of surface space.

4. Who messaged Tara about a discovery on Europa?

- A. A scientist.
- B. Her ancestor.
- C. Len.
- D. A stranger.

5. What powers the solar cruiser?

- A. Wind energy.
- B. Nuclear fusion.
- C. The sun's energy.
- D. Electric charge.

6. What was discovered beneath Europa's icy surface?

- A. A new form of energy.
- B. Ancient ruins.
- C. Gold and precious metals.
- D. A hidden city.

7. The ruins on Europa indicated that the previous civilization was:

- A. Primitive.
- B. Similar to early humans.
- C. Less advanced than humanity.
- D. In some respects, superior to humanity.

8. Where is Jupiter's storm mentioned in the story?
- A. On its moon, Europa.
  - B. In its core.
  - C. On its surface.
9. Why did Tara visit Europa?
- A. For a vacation.
  - B. To study at a university.
  - C. To meet Len.
  - D. Because of Len's message about a discovery.
10. By the end of the story, what does Tara realize?
- A. Europa should be colonized.
  - B. The universe is full of mysteries.
  - C. Mars is the best planet in the solar system.
  - D. Humanity should stop exploring.

**Answers:**

1. C. 2145 The passage begins with, "In the year 2145..." D. In its atmosphere.
2. D. Mars The passage states, "Tara lived on Mars..."
3. B. To protect against sandstorms. The text says, "...to protect against the occasional sandstorms."
4. C. Len. The passage mentions, "One day, Tara received a message from her friend, Len..."
5. C. The sun's energy. The passage mentions the cruiser is "powered by the sun's energy."
6. B. Ancient ruins. The text states, "Beneath the ice, they found ancient ruins..."
7. D. In some respects, superior to humanity's. The text mentions, "...with technology that was, in some respects, superior to humanity's."
- 8 C. On its surface. The story describes passing by Jupiter with its "gigantic storm that had raged for centuries."
9. D. Because of Len's message about a discovery. Tara decided to visit Europa after reading Len's message that said, "We've found something strange beneath the icy surface."
10. B. The universe is full of mysteries. The passage concludes with Tara's realization that "the universe was full of mysteries."