

Name: _____

Venus

By Cynthia Sherwood



Did you know that Earth has a twin? It's Venus, the second planet from the sun. Venus is the planet that comes closest to Earth, even though it's still very far away—about 38 million miles (about 61 million kilometers). Venus is almost the same size as Earth and is made up of similar material, so that's why scientists call it Earth's twin.

Venus is Earth's opposite in other ways. Because it's much

Did you know ...



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spacecraft without people on board have visited. Those spacecraft have taken very detailed pictures of Venus. The most famous one was named "Magellan" and it orbited Venus for four years, ending in 1994. Using radar, Magellan made detailed maps of almost all of Venus's surface.

When you look into the night sky, you can often spot Venus. That's because it's the brightest thing you can see, except for the sun and moon. Venus is sometimes called the "Morning Star" or "Evening Star" because it appears shortly before sunrise and shortly after sunset.

Venus is unique among our solar system's planets in one unusual way. It's the only planet to rotate clockwise on its axis, in the same direction that you'd see the hands of a clock move. All the other planets turn in the opposite direction, known as "counterclockwise."

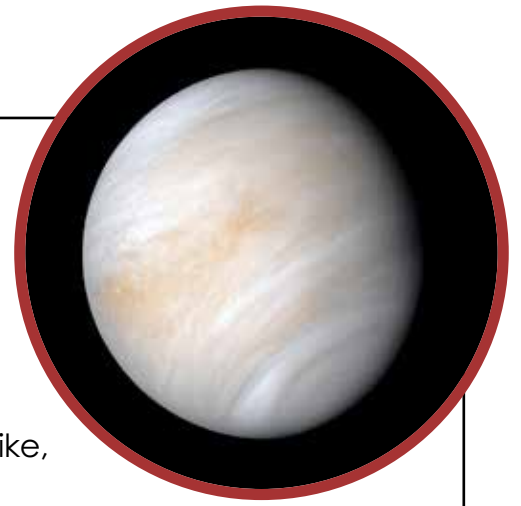
like Earth clouds, they're made of a poison called "sulfuric acid."

Venus and Mercury are the only planets without moons.

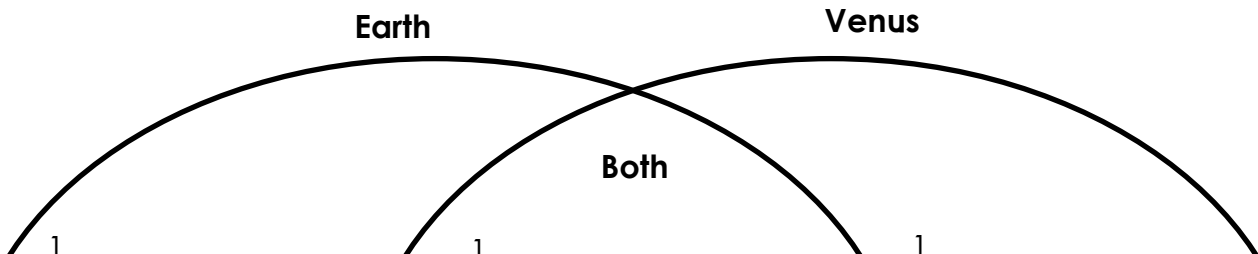
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1. In the Venn diagram, list two ways Earth and Venus are alike, and two ways they're different.



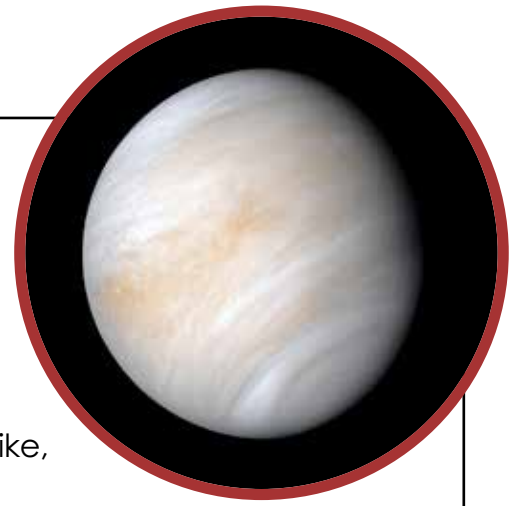
2. Why is Venus sometimes called the "Morning Star" or the "Evening Star"?

3. Explain how Earth's rotation is different from Venus's.

ANSWER KEY

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1. In the Venn diagram, list two ways Earth and Venus are alike, and two ways they're different.

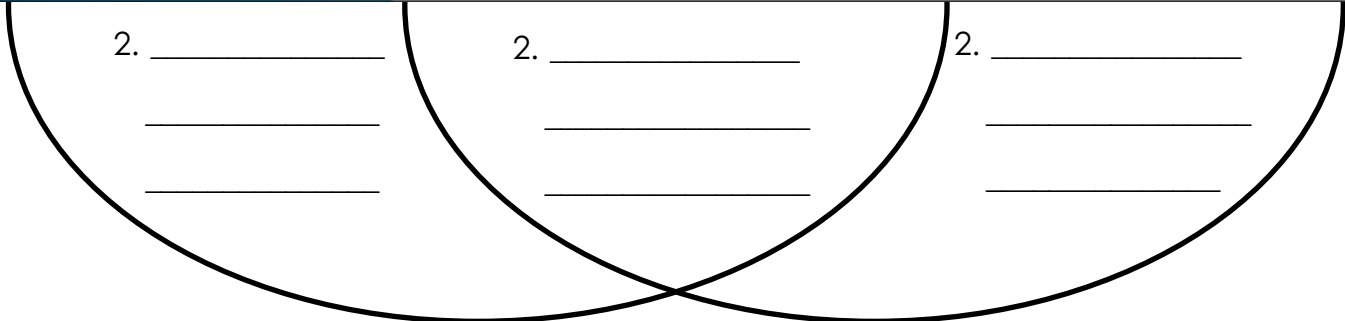
Answers will vary. For similarities, students might mention that they are made out of similar material, they are about the same size, they both have clouds, or they both have volcanoes.

For differences, students may say that Venus is hotter and Earth is cooler; Venus probably does not have water and Earth has water; Earth rotates counterclockwise and Venus rotates clockwise; Earth has a moon Venus does not.



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2. Why is Venus sometimes called the "Morning Star" or the "Evening Star"?

It appears shortly before sunrise and shortly after sunset.

3. Explain how Earth's rotation is different from Venus's.

Earth rotates counterclockwise, Venus rotates clockwise.