

Mission to Mars

Ezra put on his helmet. Today was the big day. His family had been preparing for their move for over a year. Ezra had had to say goodbye to his friends. He'd even had to say goodbye to his dog. Pets weren't allowed at the first settlement on Mars.

Everyone acted like it was a great thing that Ezra's family had been chosen as part of the first settlement. His dad was a doctor and his mom was a teacher. They would be very valuable to the community there. But Ezra wasn't thrilled about it. No pets. No baseball. Not even any potato chips. They had to eat weird space food.

Ezra stood in line to climb into the space shuttle behind his mom. She was trying to hold his hand, but the space suit made it awkward. There were thousands of people standing around watching them climb up the ladder. There were millions more watching on TV. When his friend Tony had moved to New Jersey, Ezra was the only one who had come to say goodbye. That was only one of the billions of ways that this move felt different.

Ezra had to sit in a special seat for take off. He couldn't look out the window like you could on an airplane. Maybe that was for the best. Ezra wasn't sure if he wanted to see Earth as he said goodbye. He wondered if he would ever set foot on his home planet again.

The first night at the settlement they had to attend orientation. They were among the first regular families to be chosen to move to Mars, but astronauts and scientists had been living there for years. Ezra and his family went into the space pod to listen to the presentation. It was called “The Reality of Life on Mars.”

The lead astronaut began. “So far you’ve seen the parts of our settlement that we’ve shown to people back on Earth. The sky walks, the space trains, the astro-apartments.” Ezra nodded. It was all pretty cool, but nothing was unexpected. And he still missed his friends.

The astronaut continued. “Tonight we’d like to show you something that no one on Earth has seen. Something that might make your transition here a little easier. We call it the Mars Rover!”

As he said the words, a portal opened and in ran the craziest creatures Ezra had ever seen. They were the size of medium dogs and they walked on four legs, but otherwise they were totally different. They had smooth skin in all kinds of colors, puff-balls for tails, and antennae on top of their heads. They had two tongues, which somehow looked super cute hanging out of each side of their mouths.

“Each of you will be matched with your own Mars Rover to keep you company,” said the astronaut. “They are coming around right now to choose you.”



A purple one came up to Ezra and sniffed. It licked him with its two purple tongues. Ezra smiled. It turned out Mars might not be so bad after all.



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What is NOT mentioned as something that Ezra is sad to leave behind?
 - a. His dog
 - b. Baseball
 - c. His school
 - d. Potato chips

2. Who went to Mars before Ezra's family?
 - a. Doctors and teachers
 - b. His friend Tony
 - c. Families
 - d. Astronauts and scientists

3. Why didn't Ezra mind that he couldn't look out the window of the space shuttle?
 - a. Because he didn't want to see all the things he would miss
 - b. Because he was nervous to travel
 - c. Because his friend Tony wasn't there
 - d. Because he was eating potato chips

4. Why does Ezra say that Mars might not be so bad after all?
 - a. Because he likes the space food
 - b. Because he has a new pet
 - c. Because there are space trains
 - d. Because he lives in an astro-apartment

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. What is NOT mentioned as something that Ezra is sad to leave behind?
 - a. His dog
 - b. Baseball
 - c. His school**
 - d. Potato chips
2. Who went to Mars before Ezra's family?
 - a. Doctors and teachers
 - b. His friend Tony
 - c. Families
 - d. Astronauts and scientists**
3. Why didn't Ezra mind that he couldn't look out the window of the space shuttle?
 - a. Because he didn't want to see all the things he would miss**
 - b. Because he was nervous to travel
 - c. Because his friend Tony wasn't there
 - d. Because he was eating potato chips
4. Why does Ezra say that Mars might not be so bad after all?
 - a. Because he likes the space food
 - b. Because he has a new pet**
 - c. Because there are space trains
 - d. Because he lives in an astro-apartment