

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 24 million miles (about 39 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 closer to the sun than Earth, Venus is extremely hot on its surface—about 870 degrees Fahrenheit (466 degrees Celsius). That's hotter than any other planet. It's even hotter than most ovens! Venus is also very dry. Scientists think Venus used to have a lot of water, just like Earth, but it all boiled away from the heat. Much of Venus is now covered by volcanoes. It has the most of any planet and some are huge—up to 150 miles (241 kilometers) long.

Although astronauts have never landed on Venus, several spacecraft without people on board have



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"Morning Star" or "Evening Star" because it appears brightest 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 "counter-clockwise."

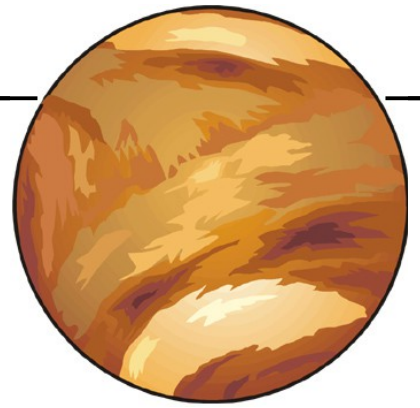
Venus is known as the "cloudy planet." The clouds on Venus aren't made from water like Earth clouds, they're made of a poison called "sulfuric acid."

Venus and Mercury are the only planets without moons.

Name: _____

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

Earth

Venus

Both

1. _____

1. _____

1. _____



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

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

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3.