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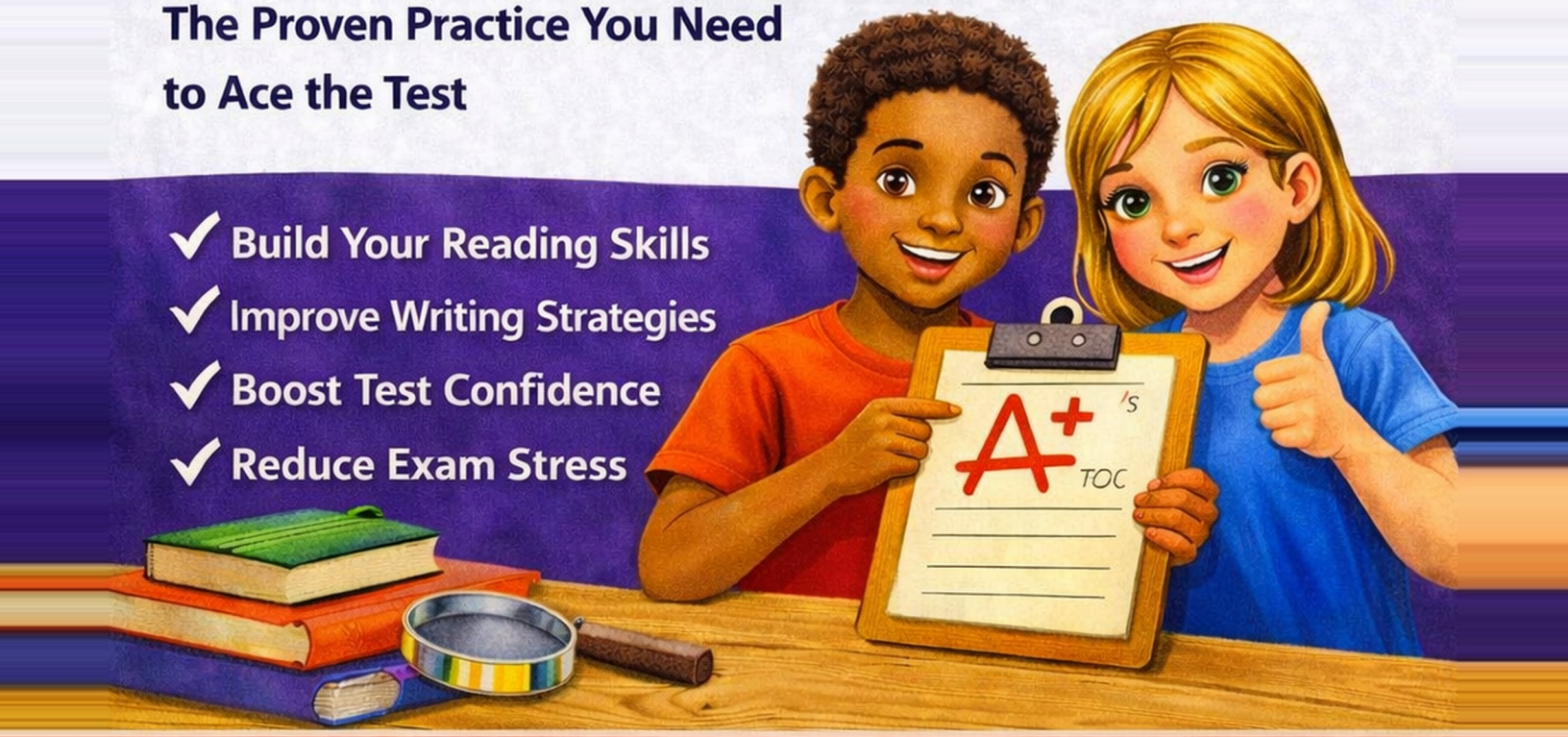
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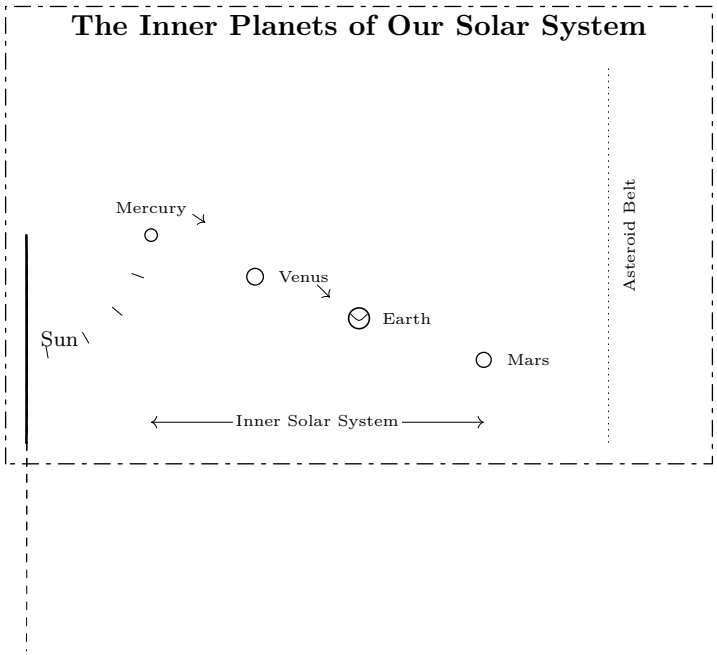
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Read the passage and the illustration below. Then answer questions 1–8.



A diagram of the inner planets of our solar system

Our Amazing Solar System

1 Look up on a clear night and you can see dozens of stars—but only one yellow dot that moves slowly across the sky: a planet in our own solar system. Our solar system is made up of the Sun, eight planets, dozens of moons, millions of asteroids, and countless comets, all held together by the invisible force of gravity. It is so enormous that even traveling at the speed of light, it would take more than four hours to cross from one side to the other.

The Sun: Our Star



Kind rows? Proof in text.
Scan Me

2 The Sun sits at the center of our solar system and is, by far, its largest member. It makes up about 99.8 percent of all the mass in the solar system. The Sun is a giant ball of hot gas that produces energy through a process called *nuclear fusion*—hydrogen atoms collide and merge, releasing enormous amounts of light and heat. Without the Sun's energy, life on Earth could not exist.

The Eight Planets

3 Eight planets orbit the Sun in our solar system, divided into two groups. The four *inner planets*—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars—are rocky and relatively small. The four *outer planets*—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—are much larger and made mostly of gas and ice. Jupiter is so enormous that more than 1,300 Earths could fit inside it.

4 Each planet is unique. Mercury is the smallest and fastest, completing its orbit around the Sun in just 88 Earth days. Venus is the hottest, with surface temperatures hot enough to melt lead. Mars has the tallest known volcano in the solar system—Olympus Mons—which rises nearly three times higher than Mount Everest. Saturn's rings are made of billions of pieces of ice and rock, ranging in size from a grain of sand to a house.

Beyond the Planets

5 Beyond the eight planets lies the Kuiper Belt, a region full of icy objects including the dwarf planet Pluto. Farther still is the Oort Cloud, a distant shell of icy debris that may be where long-period comets originate. When comets travel toward the Sun, the Sun's heat melts some of their ice, creating the glowing tail that makes them so dramatic and beautiful in the night sky.

6 Scientists have discovered thousands of planets orbiting other stars. Some of these *exoplanets* may have conditions suitable for life. Missions like the James Webb Space Telescope are studying these distant worlds. The more we learn about our own solar system, the better we understand our place in the vast, breathtaking universe beyond.

Read this dictionary entry.

orbit *verb*

1. to travel in a curved path around another object
2. to move in a circle around a central point
3. the path followed by one body around another
4. to revolve repeatedly around something larger

1) Which meaning of the word *orbit* is used in paragraph 3?

(A) Definition 4
(B) Definition 2
(C) Definition 1
(D) Definition 3

Use the passage "Our Amazing Solar System" to answer this question.

2) Which sentence from the article is an **opinion**?

(A) When comets travel toward the Sun, the Sun's heat melts some of their ice. (paragraph 5)
(B) Mercury is the smallest and fastest planet. (paragraph 4)
(C) The Sun makes up about 99.8 percent of all the mass in the solar system. (paragraph 2)
(D) Comets are so dramatic and beautiful in the night sky. (paragraph 5)



Autumn parts?
Mind the tone.
Scan Me

Read the poem. Then answer questions 15–16.



Brain quizzes?
Mind the gap.
Scan Me

The Recipe

To make a memory you will keep,
begin with one warm afternoon,
a grandmother's hands, flour-dusted,
and a wooden spoon.

Add two cups of paying attention
to the stories that she shares,
a pinch of patience while you wait
for something rising in the air.

Fold in the laughter, slow and steady,
mix in all the things she knows—
pour it into something worthy,
then just watch the magic grow.

The oven timer dings and sings
and out comes something gold and round—
not just a cake, but all the love
in one small kitchen to be found.

So when you're grown and far away
and reach for something sweet,
you'll taste that afternoon again—
a memory complete.

15) What does the phrase *"something rising in the air"* most likely mean in line 8 of the poem?

(A) smoke from the oven that fills the kitchen
(B) both the bread dough rising and the growing excitement and anticipation of waiting for the baked treat
(C) a balloon that floats up toward the ceiling of the kitchen
(D) flour dust floating in sunlight by the window

Use the poem "The Recipe" to answer this question.

16) The poet writes about adding "two cups of paying attention" and "a pinch of patience" in lines 5–7. Why does the poet most likely use **recipe language** this way?

(A) To suggest that the poem is actually a real cake recipe that should be followed step by step
(B) To show that attention and patience are things that can be measured in a kitchen
(C) To warn readers that too much patience will ruin a baked treat
(D) To playfully extend the recipe metaphor to show that creating a lasting memory requires the same careful ingredients as baking

Use the poem "The Recipe" to answer this question.

Epic gags? Scan for seas. Scan Me