B1-B2 English Worksheet
NASA's 378-Day Mars Isolation Experiment: Life Inside the Habitat

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Article

On 31 October 2026, four volunteers finally stepped out of a building at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. For 378 days, they had been taking part in a simulated mission to Mars without leaving Earth. The team moved into a 3D-printed habitat in October 2025 and stayed together for more than a year. NASA wanted to find out how people cope with living and working far from family in a confined space. The volunteers could carry out experiments inside, but they could not simply leave for an ordinary walk.

The crew had to make do with limited supplies, look after the habitat and grow some of their food. They also had to take turns practising spacewalks on an artificial Martian surface. When complicated problems appeared, the team needed to work through them together. Messages to mission controllers were deliberately delayed to imitate communication between planets. For around two weeks, the volunteers experienced a planned break in contact. They had to rely on their own judgement and follow a regular routine instead of expecting instant advice. It was a demanding test of patience and teamwork.

After the experiment ended, the four volunteers stepped outside and prepared for health checks and interviews with NASA researchers. The team would spend about two weeks discussing what went well and what was difficult. The study could help improve future missions, but it was not the same as travelling to Mars. Emergency help was available nearby, and Earth's gravity never changed. Still, NASA hopes the research will show how people handle isolation and restricted resources. Could you share both a home and a workplace with the same three people for 378 days, with little privacy and no normal contact with friends?

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

No.	Statement	T / F
1	The volunteers stayed on Earth for the entire experiment.	
2	The four participants spent less than twelve months in the habitat.	
3	NASA was interested in how people manage life in a confined environment.	
4	The crew were free to leave for ordinary walks whenever they wished.	
5	The team received immediate responses from mission control throughout the mission.	
6	A period without normal contact was deliberately included in the experiment.	
7	The experiment reproduced the weaker gravity that astronauts would experience on Mars.	
8	NASA planned to review the volunteers' experiences after they left the habitat.	

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. stepped out of	A. discover information
2. taking part in	B. take care of someone or something
3. moved into	C. participating in an activity
4. find out	D. deal with a problem carefully, step by step
5. carry out	E. manage using only what is available
6. make do with	F. do something one person after another
7. look after	G. left a building or enclosed place
8. take turns	H. depend on someone or something
9. work through	I. perform a task or activity
10. rely on	J. started living in a new place

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. volunteers	A. normal
2. confined	B. complex
3. supplies	C. investigation
4. complicated	D. restricted
5. demanding	E. accessible
6. teamwork	F. challenging
7. ordinary	G. intentionally
8. available	H. participants
9. research	I. cooperation
10. deliberately	J. provisions

Use the New Language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

No.	Your sentence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Discussion Questions

Student A	Student B
1. What is the longest time you have spent sharing a home with other people?	1. Should volunteers be paid well for spending over a year in isolation?
2. Could you live in a small space for a year? What would be hardest?	2. Is technical knowledge or teamwork more important on a long mission?
3. Which three personal items would you take into a Mars habitat?	3. When should a team leader make a decision without asking everyone?
4. How do you feel when someone takes hours to reply to a message?	4. How can people protect their privacy in a small shared living space?
5. What rules help people share a home without arguing?	5. Can an experiment on Earth teach NASA enough to justify its cost?
6. When have you had to make do with very limited supplies?	6. Should crew members be able to leave if the experience becomes unbearable?
7. Would you rather join this mission with friends or with strangers?	7. What could happen if astronauts cannot contact their families quickly?
8. What would you do first after 378 days away from ordinary life?	8. Would you rather see money spent on problems on Earth or on exploring Mars?

Answer Key

True/False	1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=F, 5=F, 6=T, 7=F, 8=T
Phrase Match	1=G, 2=C, 3=J, 4=A, 5=I, 6=E, 7=B, 8=F, 9=D, 10=H
Synonym Match	1=H, 2=D, 3=J, 4=B, 5=F, 6=I, 7=A, 8=E, 9=C, 10=G

Example Sentences With the Phrases

No.	Example sentence
1	After 378 days, the volunteers stepped out of the habitat into fresh air.
2	Four people were taking part in the long Mars simulation.
3	The crew moved into the 3D-printed building in October 2025.
4	NASA wanted to find out how isolation affected daily routines.
5	The volunteers had to carry out scientific and maintenance tasks.
6	They learnt to make do with the supplies already inside the habitat.
7	Everyone had to look after the shared equipment and living areas.
8	Crew members had to take turns completing certain duties.
9	The team had to work through technical difficulties together.
10	Without quick replies, the crew had to rely on their own judgement.