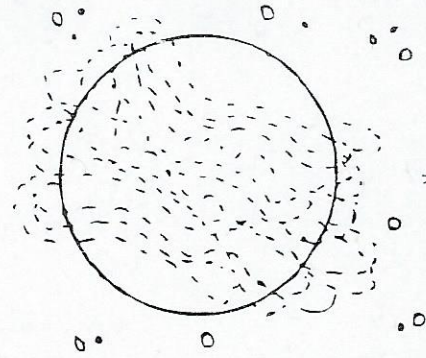# VOYAGER I

Day 5

Astronomers have been studying the planets for thousands of years. Most of what they learned came by looking into space through telescopes. This, though, did not give them the most accurate information. They were forced to guess at a lot of things. Now, spacecrafts travel right up to distant planets and send back information of the things that astronomers could only guess at before.

On September 5, 1977, *Voyager I* was launched to begin its trip through space. On March 5, 1979, it reached the planet Jupiter. Packed with all kinds of sensitive instruments, the small craft started sending pictures and other data about the biggest planet and its moons.

Astronomers were delighted and surprised by what they discovered. *Voyager I* found a faint ring around Jupiter. It also found another moon, bringing the total number of Jupiter's moons to 16. It revealed volcanic action on Io, one of Jupiter's moons. Astronomers learned more than they ever knew about the surface of Jupiter and the gases that surround it. Images of the Great Red Spot on Jupiter showed it to be big enough to swallow two Earths.

Voyager I is now on an uncharted journey outside our solar system that could last millions of years. It is studying other areas of space. If beings from another civilization should find it, they will discover phonograph records of music and other sounds of Earth as well as electronically coded photographs onboard.

Voyager I has been a great help to scientists. The more they learn about other planets, the better they can understand the origin and future of Earth.

VOYAGER 1

Answer the questions.

1. Before spacecrafts, how did astronomers study the planets?

    _____

2. What spacecraft was launched on September 5, 1977?

    _____

3. When did it reach Jupiter? _____

4. How long did it take the spacecraft to get there? _____

5. Write two things that astronomers learned about Jupiter from the spacecraft.

    _____

6. How big is the Red Spot? _____

7. Why is it important to study other planets? _____

    _____

8. Where is *Voyager I* now? _____

    _____

9. What will space beings discover if they find *Voyager I*? _____

    _____

Research: Find a diagram of the planets in an encyclopedia. What is the next planet beyond Jupiter?