

6. Drums in Space

¹Brenda Bongos was a happy, artistic girl in the seventh grade with one big ambition: to play the drums in a band. ²However, one huge obstacle was in her way. ³To be good enough to play in a band, Brenda had to practice a lot, but she lived next-door to a nursing home for elderly people, many of them sick. ⁴She worried that the sound of beating drums and crashing cymbals would really get on their nerves.



⁵Brenda was a very caring, respectful girl. ⁶She always tried to find a way to practice her drums without bothering other people. ⁷This meant that she practiced in the strangest places, such as a basement, an attic, and even a shower. ⁸Despite this, Brenda was determined to practice as much as she could, so she spent most of her time drumming on boxes and books. ⁹One day, while watching a science documentary on TV, she heard that sound cannot travel in outer space because there's no air. ¹⁰At that moment, Brenda Bongos decided to become a sort of musical astronaut.

¹¹With the help of the Internet, and lots of work, Brenda built a space bubble. ¹²It was a big, glass ball connected to a machine that sucked out all the air inside the ball. ¹³A drum kit and a chair were all that was inside the glass sphere. ¹⁴Brenda put on the space suit she had made, which was complete with an oxygen tank, entered the bubble, turned on the machine, and played those drums like a wild child! ¹⁵It wasn't long before Brenda Bongos — "The Musical Astronaut" — was famous. ¹⁶She mounted speakers on the outside of the glass ball so that the crowds of people and her new nursing home friends could hear her play. ¹⁷Then, because of her popularity, she started giving concerts outside the bubble. ¹⁸Soon she was even more famous. ¹⁹Finally, Brenda was a real musical astronaut, and had gone far beyond her first ambition of playing drums in a band.

²⁰Years later, when a news reporter asked her how she had achieved all this, she thought for a moment and answered, "If those old people next-door hadn't mattered so much to me, I wouldn't have gone to such lengths to find a solution, and none of this would have ever happened."

Circle **T** if you are certain this sentence is true. Circle **F** if you are certain it is false. Circle **U** if it is unknown because you need more information. Add the sentence number(s) that best supports your true or false answer.

1. Brenda always wanted to play the drums in a rock band. T ____ , F ____ , or U
2. Brenda didn't want to bother people so she tried playing drums in a basement, attic, and closet. T ____ , F ____ , or U

Circle the letter next to the correct answer or write the answer on the lines given.

3. Which of these would best describe the theme of the story?
- | | |
|--|---|
| a. If you play the drums, you can become an astronaut. | c. Don't give up when things get hard; keep looking for a solution. |
| b. Caring for older people will make you a better drummer. | d. It is good to be a drummer because they are usually nice people. |
4. Number the events in order.
- _____ Brenda always wanted to play drums in a band.
- _____ The Musical Astronaut became famous.
- _____ Brenda came out of the bubble and began playing concerts.
- _____ Brenda practiced drums in strange places.
5. Brenda got the idea to become a musical astronaut from:
- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| a. a science book. | c. her guitarist. |
| b. a radio station. | d. none of the above |
6. Why did Brenda practice her drumming on books and boxes? _____
- _____
7. Why can't sound travel in space? _____
- _____

Circle **PT** for probably true or **PF** for probably false. Be sure to supply the best evidence that supports your answer: sentence number(s) and/or personal knowledge.

8. Brenda used science websites on the Internet to help her build her bubble and make her spacesuit.
- PT or PF Sentence _____ Personal knowledge: _____
- _____
9. Brenda floated while she played drums inside the bubble.
- PT or PF Sentence _____ Personal knowledge: _____
- _____
10. Brenda is very intelligent.
- PT or PF Sentences _____ Personal knowledge: _____
- _____

Answers

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1. U; There is no evidence that Brenda wanted to play rock music, only that she wanted to play the drums. Since we don't know what kind of music she wanted to play, the answer is "U."
2. U; This is unknown because we do not know whether or not Brenda practiced her drums in a closet. All sentence 7 tells us is that she practiced in the strangest places, with examples of a basement, attic, and shower. Perhaps she also practiced in a closet, perhaps not. We simply do not have any evidence either way.
3. c
4. 1, 3, 4, 2
5. d
6. She didn't want to bother other people, and she wanted to practice the drums more.
7. Sound needs air to travel. There is no air in outer space.
8. PT; 11; Sentence 11 tells us that she used the Internet and it is a reasonable inference to assume she used some science websites given the task. Personal knowledge; for example: Most 7th graders would not know enough about the construction of either a spacesuit or an airless room without the help of science information related to those topics, both of which could be found on the Internet. It is more likely that 7th graders would use the Internet rather than books in the library.
9. PF; Personal knowledge; for example, Brenda only removed air from the glass ball, and this does not change the force of gravity. In order for her to float, the force exerted by gravity would need to be much less than it normally is.
10. PT; 11, 12, 14; Sentences 11 and 12 explain that Brenda built a space bubble and a machine that sucked air out of the ball. In addition, sentence 14 tells us that she also made a space suit that made use of an oxygen tank. This is not something that the average 7th grader could do. Personal knowledge; for example: Seventh graders do not normally have the necessary knowledge to build a space bubble, a machine that sucks air, and a space suit.