Assessment Date:____/____/_____ Student:_____ Examiner:_____

Words Read Correctly (WRC): _____ Errors: _____ Notes: _____

Kuiper Belt Facts

Mr J

Beyond the gas giant Neptune lies a region of space filled with icy bodies. Known as 16
the Kuiper Belt, this chilly expanse holds trillions of objects, remnants of the early 30
solar system. Dutch astronomer Jan Oort first proposed in 1950 that some comets 43
might come from the the solar system's far suburbs. That reservoir later became 56
known as the Oort cloud. Earlier, in 1943, astronomer Kenneth Edgeworth had 68
suggests comets and larger bodies might exist beyond Neptune. In 1951, astronomer 80
Gerard Kuiper predicted the existence of a belt of icy objects that now bears his name. 96
Some astronomers refer to it as the Edgeworth-Kupier Belt. 106

When the solar system formed, much of the gas, dust and rocks pulled together to form 122
the sun and planets. The planets then swept most of the remaining debris into the sun or 139
out of the solar system. But bodies farther out remained safe from gravitational tugs of 154
planets like Jupiter, and so managed to stay safe as they slowly orbited the sun. The 170
Kuiper Belt and its compatriot, the more distant and spherical Oort Cloud, contain the 184
leftover remnants from the beginning of the solar system and can provide valuable 197
insights into its birth. 201

The most crowded section of the Kuiper Belt lies between 42 and 48 times Earth's 216
distance from the sun, the classical Kuiper Belt. The orbit of objects in this region 231
remain stable for the most part, although some occasionally have their course changed 244
slightly when they drift too close to Neptune. 252

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