Reading Comprehension: Comet vs. Asteroid

Answer the questions below after reading about comets and asteroids on page 1.

1. What is the main idea of the passage on page 1?

The main idea is that comets and asteroids are both small celestial bodies that orbit the sun, but they are made of different materials.

2. What are the differences between a comet and an asteroid? What are the similarities?

Comets are small solar system bodies made of ice and dust. Unlike asteroids, comets have thin, fuzzy atmospheres called comas and tails of gas, dust, and ice caused by solar wind. Asteroids, on the other hand, are celestial bodies made of carbon, rocks, and metals. Both comets and asteroids are small solar system bodies that orbit the sun.

3. In outer space there is no air resistance; all objects in motion will stay in motion. With that in mind, what do you think causes comets and asteroids to move?

Comets and asteroids start to move when they are first formed; they can be formed from other big space objects colliding, or from the collapse of space giants. Eventually, gravity from the sun pulls them into orbit and they continue that way until they hit something.

4. **True or False?** For questions that you mark false, rewrite the statement so that it is true.

a. An asteroid has a tail.	☐ true	■ false	Asteroids do not have tails.
b. A comet has an orbit.	■ true	☐ false	
c. The coma is just an optical illusion.	☐ true	■ false	The coma is a thin atmosphere around a comet.
d. Some asteroids are as big as our moon.	☐ true	■ false	The largest known asteroid is a quarter the size of Earth's moon.
e. A small solar system body is not a planet.	■ true	☐ false	
f. Comets are not round.	■ true	☐ false	