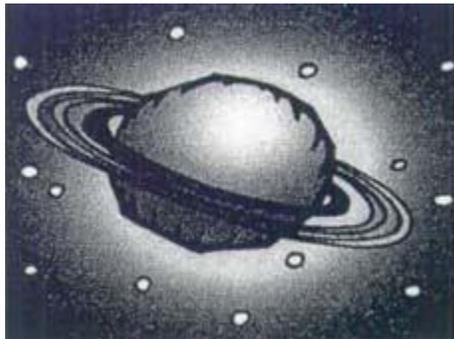


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The Solar System

Our Solar System is made of nine planets that revolve around the sun.



Our Solar System

The Sun

- The Sun is a huge, yellow star. It is only one star among billions, but it is important. As the center of our solar system, the Sun is the source of all life on Earth: the rays from the sun cause plants to grow which are eaten by the animals.
- You could fit one million of our Earths inside the Sun. The Sun is huge and has tremendous gravity. Gravity is the force that causes objects to fall and allow objects to have weight. If you weigh ninety pounds on Earth you would weigh close to a ton on the Sun.
- The Sun is closer to the Earth than any other star in the universe.
- The Sun is made mostly of hydrogen and helium. In about five billion years, the Sun will lose all of its hydrogen and become a red giant star. Red giants are among the oldest and coolest stars in the universe. Stars become red giants towards the end of their life cycle because they no longer have hydrogen, but only helium to fuel them.
- The exterior of the Sun is 6,000 degrees Celsius (that's 10,832 degrees Fahrenheit)!

Even more shocking, the interior is 15,000,000 degrees Celsius (27,000,032 degrees Fahrenheit)!

- The Sun is so bright, you would need a coronagraph to look directly at it. This The telescope has a screen which blocks the intense light emitted from the Sun.
- The Sun may be the center of the solar system, but it is not the center of our galaxy. The Sun is actually located closer to the edge of the Milky Way galaxy than the center.

Planets are celestial bodies that orbit a star. For example, in the Milky Way Galaxy, the planets orbit the Sun.

- The names of the planets in the Milky Way Galaxy (in order from the closest to the sun to the furthest away) are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. The planets are all named after ancient Greek and Roman gods.

- **Jovian planets** (Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus) have thick atmospheres, large or massive in size, and are under enormous pressure.

- **Terrestrial planets** (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and Pluto) have thin atmospheres and are smaller in size.

- **Mercury** is the closest planet to the Sun and has no atmosphere. Mercury is the Roman name of the messenger of the gods.

- **Venus** is the second closest planet to the Sun and the closest planet to Earth. Unlike the other planets, Venus revolves backwards on its axis because of the gravitational pull from Earth. Venus is also known for its many volcanoes. In Roman mythology, Venus is the goddess of love.

- **Earth** is the planet we live on. It is the largest of all the terrestrial planets in the inner solar system. It is presently the only planet to have life. In Greek mythology, Earth's mother was named Geia, for the Earth's mountains, valleys, streams and the land.

- **Mars** has no gravity. Speculations have been made as to whether Mars contains life because of a picture taken from a satellite that looks like a face sculpted into the surface of Mars, but no scientific facts prove the existence of Martians. Mars is the Roman god of war.

- **Neptune** is the eighth planet from the sun and has the lowest temperature out of all the planets in the Milky Way Galaxy. The lowest recorded temperature on Neptune was - 370 degrees Fahrenheit (room temperature is between 70 and 73 degrees Fahrenheit and the average body temperature is 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). Neptune is the name of the Roman god of sea.

- **Pluto** is the furthest from the sun and the smallest planet in the Milky Way Galaxy. Its moon is large in comparison to the planet which is why the two are known as a double planet system. Pluto is the god of the underworld in Roman mythology.

- In the nineteenth century, a planet named Vulcan (the Roman god of fire) was believed to exist between Mercury and the Sun because of Mercury's abnormal movement. Later, Einstein's general theory of relativity helped explain this phenomenon in 1915 proving that Vulcan did not exist.

- In July 2005 a tenth planet was believed to be found further out past Pluto.

- The planet is called 2003UB313 until an official name is given to it. The planet was discovered by astronomers Mike Brown, Chad Trujillo, and David Rabinowitz using the Palomar Observatory's Samuel Oschin telescope. 2003UB313 is believed to be a gray

planet with low temperatures. The exterior is frozen methane and the interior is made up of rocks and ice.

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