

# Explore Our Solar System

## Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune!

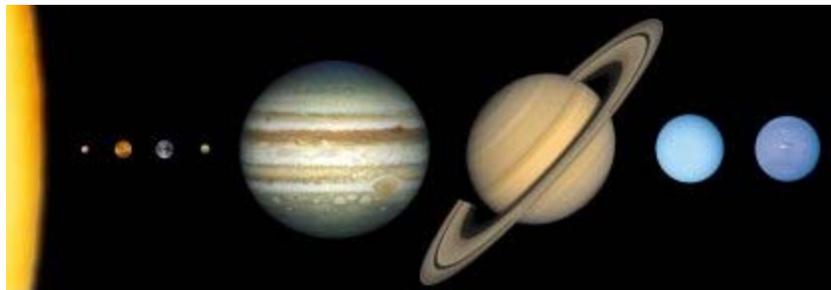
Eight planets **orbit**, or revolve around, the sun. The planets and the sun are parts of our solar system.



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Which planet is shown here?

The **sun** is a star. It is a giant ball of hot gas.



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**Mercury** is the closest planet to the sun. It has mountains, cliffs, and plains.

**Venus** is the hottest planet. It can reach up to 850 degrees. That is hot enough to melt a rocket ship!

**Earth** is the planet pictured on the cover. It is our home. It is the only planet that has the oxygen and water that people, animals, and plants need to live.

**Mars** is a cold planet. It is sometimes called the Red Planet because it has reddish soil.

**Jupiter** is the largest planet. It is made of thick gases. If you tried to land a rocket ship, you would sink into the planet!

**Saturn** is the second-largest planet. Like Jupiter, it is made mostly of gases. Its rings are made up of rock, ice, and dust.

**Uranus** is cold and windy. It was the first planet to be discovered with a telescope, in 1781.

**Neptune** is called the Blue Planet. It is the coldest planet because it is farthest from the sun.

### **Stay Smart!**

#### **Ring Around the Planets**

Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are gas planets. They all have rings. Only Saturn's rings are thick enough to be seen easily from Earth.

- To remember the order and names of the planets, repeat this silly sentence: My very excellent mother just served us nachos.