



OUR SOLAR SYSTEM

REVIEW ONLY

Observing the night sky with the naked eye, ancient astronomers noticed the moving points of light they called “planets,” which means “wanderers.” Those first planets were named for Roman deities: Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus and Saturn.

With the invention of the large telescope astronomer were able to see other planets. These included Uranus in 1781, Neptune in 1846, and Pluto in 1930, which was later redefined as a dwarf planet. Besides planets thousands of asteroids and comets fill the universe. Most asteroids orbit between Mars and Jupiter. Comets exist beyond Pluto's orbit.

There are two types of planets. Terrestrial planets, closest to the Sun, have rocky surfaces. These are Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. Those beyond Mars' orbit—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, are called Jovian planets, meaning “gas giants.”

THE SUN

A huge sphere of mostly ionized gas, the Sun is the largest star in our solar system. **size:** 332,900 times more massive than Earth **temperature:** 27 million°F **weight on the sun:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh 2,800 lbs on the sun

MERCURY

Named for the Roman messenger god, Mercury orbits the Sun more than any other planet. **diameter:** 3,031 miles **temperature:** -346°F to 950°F **rotation:** 59 Earth days **revolution:** 88 Earth days **mean distance from the sun:** 35.98 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 57 million miles **weight on Mercury:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh 38 lbs on Mercury

VENUS

Named for the Roman goddess of love and beauty, it is the only planet that rotates in the opposite direction of its orbit around the sun. **diameter:** 7,521 miles **temperature:** 55°F to 396°F **rotation:** 243 Earth days **revolution:** 243 Earth days **mean distance from the sun:** 67.23 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 26 million miles **weight on Venus:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh 88 lbs on Venus

EARTH

Earth is the only planet known to harbor life and the only planet with liquid water on its surface. Water covers 70 percent of the planet. **diameter:** 7,926 miles **temperature:** -128°F to 136°F **rotation:** 24 hours **revolution:** 365.2 days **mean distance from the sun:** 92.96 million miles

MARS

Named for the Roman god of war, Mars gets its red coloring from soil rich in iron oxide. **diameter:** 4,217 miles **rotation:** almost 25 Earth hours **temperature:** -305°F to 90°F **revolution:** 687 Earth days **mean distance from the sun:** 141.61 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 35 million miles **weight on Mars:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh 38 lbs on Mars

JUPITER

The largest planet in our solar system was named for the king of the Roman gods. Its bands of color can be seen with a large telescope. **diameter:** 88,846 miles **temperature:** -234°F average **rotation:** 10 Earth hours **revolution:** 12 Earth years **mean distance from the sun:** 483.80 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 370 million miles **weight on Jupiter:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh about 265 lbs on Jupiter

SATURN

Named for the Roman god of agriculture, Saturn was the most distant planet known to the ancients. Its rings are comprised of ice particles. **diameter:** 74,600 miles **temperature:** -288°F average **rotation:** 10.7 Earth hours **revolution:** 29.5 Earth years **mean distance from the sun:** 890.73 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 744 million miles **weight on Saturn:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh about 107 lbs on Saturn

URANUS

Originally named Georgium Sidus in honor of King George III, Uranus was discovered in 1781. It is twice as far from the sun as Saturn. **diameter:** 31,763 miles **temperature:** -353°F uniform **rotation:** 17 Earth hours **revolution:** 84 Earth years **mean distance from the sun:** 1,784.89 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 1.6 billion miles **weight on Uranus:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh 89 lbs on Uranus

NEPTUNE

Named for the Roman god of the sea, Neptune's layer of methane gives a blue coloring. Winds tear through its clouds at more than 1,200 mph. **diameter:** 30,775 miles **temperature:** -353°F **rotation:** 16 Earth hours **revolution:** 165 Earth years **mean distance from the sun:** 2,793.12 million miles **closest distance to Earth:** 2.68 billion miles **weight on Neptune:** 100 lbs on Earth would weigh about 112 lbs on Neptune

DWARF PLANETS

Named for the Roman god of the underworld, Pluto is the coldest, smallest and outermost planet in our solar system. In 2006, Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet. Other dwarf planets are Ceres, Eris, Makemake, Haumea and Sedna.

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