

The planets in our solar system. Find the differences (AGES 6-99+)

Our solar system is formed by our Sun, four terrestrial planets, four gaseous planets, dwarf planets, moons, asteroids, comets, and meteoroids. All of these bodies travel in circles or flattened circles (ellipses) around the Sun. The closer the bodies are to the Sun the faster they complete a path around the star. The objects can spin as they move. Their spin is what produces days and nights! As a planet spins one of its sides will face the Sun and that will produce the day. The side of the planet that hides from the Sun will be dark and therefore it will be night there! Some planets spin fast and their days and nights are short and others spin slowly and their days and nights are longer.

In this activity we will only talk about the 8 planets in our solar system. The first 4 planets are terrestrial and are called Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. They are terrestrial planets because they are made of “hard” materials like rocks and metals. Gaseous planets like Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are made of gas. They are like giant balls of clouds and you could easily fall if you try standing on them!

Exercise:

Find the 11 differences in the solar systems in the next page. Maybe the following interesting facts of the planets will help you! There is one planet missing, which one is it? Draw it!

1. **Mercury:** is the tiniest planet and closest to the Sun. Its surface is full of craters because in the past many comets and asteroids crashed against it. Poor Mercury they left him all wounded!

2. **Venus:** is the second planet from the Sun and the hottest! You would definitely melt on Venus. The temperature on a typical day is twice as hot as your kitchen oven! And speaking of days, while a day on Earth lasts 24 hours, a day on Venus lasts 243 days! What would you do on such a long day?

3. **Earth:** The only planet where life is possible as we know it thanks to its good weather and liquid water. That’s why we need to look after it because there’s no other planet like it!

4. **Mars:** is the last terrestrial planet. It has the highest volcano in the whole solar system which is as tall as a house of 9,000 floors! Can you imagine that? On Earth, it would be taller than the highest clouds in the sky!

Asteroid belt: is a region that lies between Mars and Jupiter. Is formed by large rocks called asteroids that revolve around the Sun.

5. **Jupiter:** is the largest planet in our solar system! We could fit 65,000 Earth moons on this planet! Since Jupiter is made of clouds, giant “hurricanes” form there. The Great Red Spot is a giant storm that has been there for centuries in which we could fit 3 and a half Earths! Can you imagine having such a giant storm passing over your head?

6. **Saturn:** is the most elegant of the planets in our solar system. It has beautiful rings around it made out of ice, small rocks and dust.

7. **Uranus:** just like Jupiter, Uranus has rings, but they are thinner. A funny fact is that the planet is tilted, so compared to the other planets that in their majority spin “from left to right” (except for Venus) it spins from bottom to top!

8. **Neptune:** is the farthest planet from the Sun and because of this is very cold! It’s 12 times colder than your freezer. Also, since it’s far away from the Sun it takes Neptune almost 168 years to complete a path around the Sun! There you would die before turning one Earth-year old!

