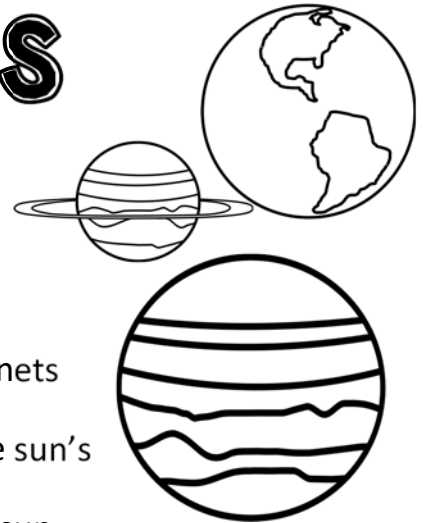


The Planets



The definition of a planet is '*a large body of matter that orbits (moves around) the sun (star)*'. Planets are a part of our solar system and a part of the Milky Way galaxy. The planets orbit the sun by following a circular path around the sun. The sun's gravity holds the planets in place as they revolve around the sun.

There are inner planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars) and the rest which are outer planets. The 8 main planets in our solar system are, in order closest to the sun: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, (Pluto), Neptune. Pluto was once considered one of the main planets, however, it has been re-classified as a dwarf planet. Mercury is the closest to the sun planet, Mercury is hot and dry and has craters on its surface. Unlike Earth, Mercury doesn't have any moons. Venus is the second closest planet to the sun, it's hot and rocky and also doesn't have any moons. Earth is the third closest, it has air and water and a moon. Mars is the fourth closest, it has two moons and gets called the red planet because it has red rocky deserts. Jupiter is the fifth planet from the sun, it is a ball of gas with at least 16 moons and is surrounded by a ring. Saturn is the sixth closest to the sun, it is also made of gas, it has many rings and 18 moons. Uranus is the seventh closest planet to the sun and is also a ball of gas with rings and at least 15 moons. Neptune is the farthest (8th) from the sun, it is the smallest and coldest planet in our solar system and like Earth, it has one moon.