

The Super Solar System!

Our planet Earth is part of a Solar System that consists of eight planets orbiting a giant, fiery star (the Sun). For thousands of years, astronomers have studied the movements of the planets across our Solar System.

The Sun: the centre of our Solar System

The Sun, which is only a medium-size star, is larger than any of the planets in our Solar System: it has a diameter (breadth) that is over one hundred times bigger than the Earth's. More than one million Earths could fit inside the Sun! The Sun produces an enormous gravitational pull which keeps all of the planets of the Solar System in their orbits. The surface temperature of the Sun is around 5500°C. If an astronaut travelled too close to the Sun (even three million miles), it would not be long before their space suit would be turned into a deadly sauna!

Planets in our Solar System

Each planet in our Solar System is unique but they do share some similarities. For example, every planet rotates on its axis, although some planets rotate quicker than others. Each planet in our Solar System revolves around the Sun as it rotates on its axis. The time it takes for a planet to make a complete circular path around the Sun is the planet's year. The path the planet follows around the Sun is called its orbit. Planets have different orbits which can take different shapes. Some orbits are nearly circular while others are more elliptical (egg-shaped).

What else is in our Solar System?

Although we tend to think only about the Sun and the planets when we consider our Solar System, there are many other types of bodies that huddle around the Sun. The Solar System includes moons (some of those moons have moons), supernova explosions, comets, meteors, asteroids and plain, old space dust. Scientists think there are even more objects in our Solar System waiting to be discovered...



Meteors, or shooting stars, are pieces of dust and debris that burn up in Earth's atmosphere.

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conjunctions	
relative clauses - look for <i>which</i> and <i>that</i>	
technical language	
brackets for extra information	

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