

# What Objects Are Part of the Solar System?

## Science Words

Say each word quietly to yourself. Then read the meaning.

Read the tip to help you remember.

**solar system** [SOH•ler SIS•tuhm] a group of objects in space made up of a star and the planets and other space objects that revolve around it

A system is a group of things that act together as a whole.

*Solar* has to do with the sun, our star.

You can put these ideas together: A *solar system* is a star and a group of objects that act together as a whole.

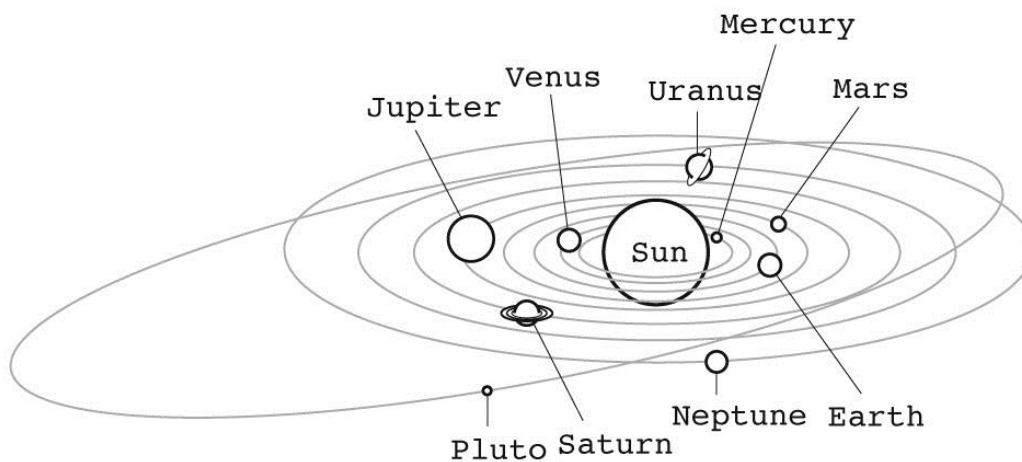
**planet** [PLAN•it] a large, round body that revolves around a star

You can make a “mind model” of a *planet*: Imagine you are holding a string with a ball on the end of it. Use your arm to trace a large circle over your head. As you move your arm faster, the ball flies out and the string is pulled tight.

In this model, the ball is a *planet* and your hand holding the string is a star.

**dwarf planets** [DWAURF PLAN•its] nearly round bodies whose orbits cross the orbits of other bodies

*Dwarf* means small. Very little is known about *dwarf planets* because they are small, very far away, and hard to study.



Pluto is a dwarf planet. Notice that Pluto's orbit crosses the orbits of the major planets.

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**comet** [KAHM•it] a chunk of frozen gases, rock, ice, and dust

If you can imagine a snowball made of ice, dirt and rock, you can imagine a *comet*.

**asteroids** [AS•tuh•ROYDZ] rock and iron objects that orbit the sun

*Asteroids* ends with the letter at the beginning of *salt*. *Asteroids* are like the salt and pepper of the solar system—they are sprinkled generously over a wide area.

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## Science Concepts

**Read the Ideas more than once. Do your best to remember them.**

1. In our solar system, Earth, the other planets, and other objects revolve around the sun, our star.
2. Our solar system has eight planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.
3. The inner planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars—are nearest to the sun, dense, and rocky.
4. The outer planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune—are made of gases and much colder than the inner planets.
5. Earth has only one moon that revolves around it; the outer planets have many moons.
6. Dwarf planets, asteroids, meteoroids, and comets also orbit the sun.
7. Dwarf planets are small bodies whose orbit crosses the orbit of other bodies, such as planets.
8. Asteroids, objects made of rock and iron, may be as small as a city block or as large as an ocean.
9. A comet is a chunk of frozen gas, dust, ice, and rock.
10. Meteoroids are pieces of asteroids that break off; meteorites are meteoroids that reach Earth.