

Solar System II Study guide

	The Solar System
asteroid	large chunks of rock or metal in space
astronaut	people who travel into space
comet	a chunk of ice mixed with rocks and dust.
gravity	invisible pulling force that keeps the planets in orbit around Sun
meteor	forms when asteroids collide & enter Earth's atmosphere
meteorite	a meteoroid that hits Earth's surface
planet	one of the eight largest objects that orbits the Sun
solar system	the Sun and all of the objects (including planets) that orbit it
telescope	an instrument that makes objects appear closer
space probes	unmanned spacecraft that travel further & stay longer

Inner Planets

Inner planets	Rocky planets - closest to the Sun - seem to have solid cores
Mercury	closest planet to the Sun - hot - little air, water, no moon
Venus	hottest planet - mostly carbon dioxide atmosphere - volcanoes 2nd brightest object in night sky, clouds made of sulphuric acid
Earth	only planet to support life - has oxygen and liquid water
Mars	planet most like Earth - 2 small moons - thin atmosphere - frozen ice caps near both poles - volcanoes, but not active

Outer

Outer Planets	gas giants - further from the Sun - huge - no solid surface - mostly made of hydrogen and helium with cores of rock & ice
Jupiter	largest planet (2 1/2 X all the other planets in the solar system combined) 67 known moons - large red spot the size of Earth, which is a 300 year old storm
Saturn	second largest planet - 62 known moons - rings made of ice and rock
Uranus	sideways planet - poles point toward Sun & it rotates on its side - has at least 27 moons
Neptune	has 13 known moons, 6 rings, and winds up to 1200 mph

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	Stars and Constellations
constellation	a group of stars that form a pattern in the sky
galaxy	a system of millions or billions of stars, together with gas and dust, held together by gravitational attraction.
light year	the distance light travels in one year 1 light year = ten trillion km.
Orion	the most recognizable constellation (the hunter); only visible in winter
Southern Cross	a constellation visible from the Southern Hemisphere
stars	a hot, glowing sphere of gases
Sun	the closest star to Earth. 150 million kilometers away. It takes 8 minutes for Sun's light to reach Earth
white / blue	Color of hotter stars
red / orange	. Color of cooler stars