

Vocabulary



asteroid an object in space smaller than a planet, that orbits a star

Asteroids are small compared to planets. All are rocky. Many asteroids are found in the asteroid belt. The asteroid belt is between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

orbit the path an object follows when it revolves around another object

Each planet in our solar system follows a regular path around the Sun. This path is called its orbit. Most orbits in our solar system are ovals that are almost, but not quite, circles. Some orbits are close to the Sun (Mercury and Venus) and others are very far away (Neptune and Pluto). Earth's orbit is about 150 million kilometers (93 million miles) from the Sun. Earth completes one orbit every $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days (one year).

planet a large object that orbits a star

The planets in our solar system are round or nearly round. Earth and the other three inner planets (Mercury, Venus, and Mars) are made of rock. The large outer planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus) are made of gas. Pluto is a mix of rock and ice.

solar system the Sun and all of the objects that move around it

In our solar system, nine planets revolve around the Sun. Moons revolve around their planets, so they also travel around the Sun with their planets. Our solar system also contains rocks called asteroids that orbit the Sun.