

Vocabulary



astronomical unit the average distance from Earth to the Sun, or 150 million kilometers (93 million miles)

Earth is 1 AU from the Sun. The closest planet to the Sun, Mercury, is 0.39 AU. The farthest planet from the Sun, Pluto, is 39.48 AU.

light-year the distance light travels in one year, or 9.5 trillion km (5.9 trillion miles)

Light travels at a speed of 300,000 km/s (186,000 mi/s). The distance to the next closest star, Centauri Proxima, is 4.2 light-years. That means it takes 4.2 years for light from that star to reach Earth. For comparison, it takes 8.5 minutes for light from the Sun to reach Earth.