

The **Sun** is a giant ball of plasma, powered by fusion. It has an 11 year cycle when we see more sun spots and solar flares.



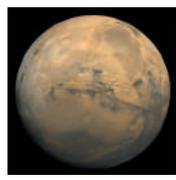
**Mercury** is the smallest planet in the Solar System and, along with Venus, is one of only two planets without any moons. Its day is twice the length of its year!



**Venus** is the hottest planet in the Solar System, over 470°C. This is because its atmosphere is made of greenhouse gases. Extreme global warming!



**Earth** is in the 'Goldilocks zone', meaning that it's "not too hot and not too cold" to have liquid water on the surface.



**Mars** is the most explored planet. Evidence suggests that it once had liquid oceans and may have supported simple life. It still has polar ice caps.



**Jupiter** is the first of the gas giants and is the largest planet in the Solar System. It has a storm, the great red spot, that is much bigger than the Earth.



**Saturn's** density is less than that of water, so it would float in a large enough bath tub! Its rings are made of small bits of ice and rock.



**Uranus** orbits on its side – its South pole points towards the Sun. It was probably knocked over by a massive collision in its early life.



**Neptune's** existence was predicted by Physicists before it was discovered in 1846. It has the fastest winds in the Solar System – up to 2000km/hr.



**Pluto** is no longer a planet. It was renamed a dwarf planet in 2006. It would take six Plutos to make the mass of the Earth's moon.



**Cassini-Huygens** is a spacecraft and lander. Huygens landed on Titan, one of Saturn's moons, whilst Cassini discovered evidence of an underground ocean on Enceladus (another of Saturn's moons).



**Voyager 1** is the first spacecraft to leave the Solar System, taking over 30 years to do so. It carries a gold-plated disc containing information about life on planet Earth.