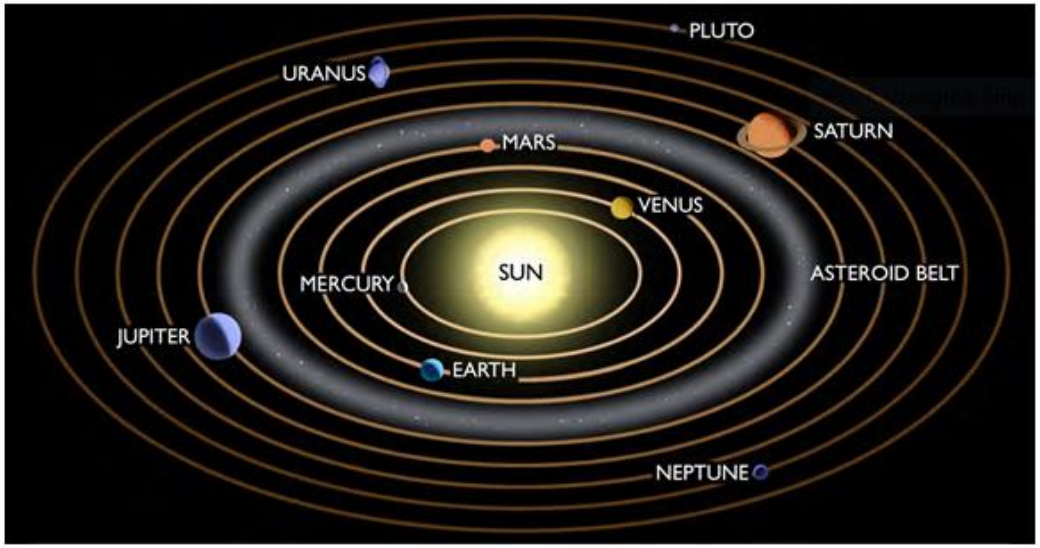
Theme 3 Earth, Sun and Moon | Non-Fiction (Explanation)

The Solar System



The solar system consists of the sun and everything which moves around the sun. This includes the nine major planets and their satellites. The planets orbit the sun. Our sun is one of millions of stars. Stars are made of burning gases.

A satellite is the name given to an object that goes around, or orbits, a larger object such as a planet. The earth's only natural satellite is called the Moon. The earth also has many man-made satellites such as the International Space Station. The man-made satellites were put into orbit around the Earth using rockets or the Space Shuttle.

Nine planets orbit our sun. They are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Mercury is the planet nearest to the sun. Pluto is furthest away. Mercury is the smallest planet. Venus is similar in size to the earth. Neptune, Saturn and Uranus are larger than the earth. Other objects found in the solar system are asteroids, comets and meteors.

Recently, Pluto was renamed a 'Dwarf Planet'.

Amazing Solar System Facts

- The solar system formed around 4.6 billion years ago.
- Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system with a surface temperature of over 450 degrees centigrade.
- Saturn isn't the only ringed planet. Other gas giants such as Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune also have rings, but they are less obvious.
- Footprints left behind by astronauts on the moon will stay there forever, as there is no wind to blow them away.
- Halley's Comet was last seen in the inner Solar System in 1986. It will be visible again from Earth in 2061.
- Many scientists believe that an asteroid impact caused the extinction of the dinosaurs around 65 million years ago.
- The first man made object sent into space was a satellite named Sputnik.



1 Fill in the table: **Solar System Facts**

When was the Solar System formed?	
Hottest planet?	
Planets with rings?	
Halley's comet next seen from earth?	
First man made object sent into space?	

2 Name the nine planets in our solar system.

3 What does the word 'orbit' mean?

4 What are stars made of?

5 What is the difference between a natural satellite and a man-made satellite?

6 Which planets are larger than the earth?

7 Name three objects found in our solar system other than planets, moons and the sun.

8 What do some scientists believe caused the destruction of dinosaurs on the earth?