

How **Big** is Space?

name: _____

The universe is BIG, REALLY BIG! So big that we measure distances in light years.

- *Light travels in the blink of an eye when it goes from a light source (ie. bulb) to your eyes. In fact, light travels at 300,000km per second, so it travels approximately 9.5 trillion km in a year! That distance represents one light year. That's a long way!*

We live on a small planet called Earth that orbits around a star we call the Sun.

- *The Earth is about 150 million km from the Sun*
- *Earth is the only planet that wasn't named after a Greek or Roman god or goddess*

The Sun, being a star, is a hot ball of glowing gases and it is the centre of our Solar System. Our Solar System is made up of eight planets and one minor or dwarf planet (Pluto).

- To remember the order of the planets, memorize the following statement,

Sister Mary Visits Every Monday Just So Uncle Ned Plays
Sun Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune Pluto

Our Solar System is one small part of our galaxy called the Milky Way.

- *Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is about 100,000 light years across*

How many galaxies are out there? Nobody knows how many galaxies there are, or how big they are, but....

- *Astronomers believe that there are millions and millions of galaxies in our universe.*
- *So far, astronomers have spotted galaxies that are 15,000 light years away!*

Indeed, the universe is really **BIG**. Stronger and more sophisticated telescopes are being developed every year. With these telescopes, we are discovering new features of our universe. As we gain more knowledge of our universe, the number of questions or mysteries grow.



Solar System (for Luca)

By Lea Knowles

The sun has got his hat on
and he wants to sing to you
the names of all the planets –
and you can join in too.

Mercury is closest
and very very hot;
when seen against the mighty Sun
it's just a tiny dot.

Low down in the southern sky
is the brightest planet, Venus;
I don't think anyone lives there –
And if they do they can't have seen us.

Some years ago we landed
a roving car on Mars;
it wobbled about taking photos
which I'd gaze upon for hours.

Jupiter, the biggest,
has a giant revolving spot -
you can probably buy some cream for that
but it would need an awful lot.

Saturn is a ball of gas
with loads and loads of rings
made of bits of ice and rock
and probably other things.

Uranus has seventeen moons
and is coloured a bluish-green;
it's actually a cold gas giant
so no-one's ever been.

Neptune is named after
the God of the Sea and water;
there can be no seas there –
but I really think there oughta!

Pluto is a small cold dwarf
that the Disney dog's named after;
it's the last and furthest from the Sun –
no more planets hereafter.

Our Earth looks wondrous and fertile
when viewed from our only moon;
we went there many years ago –
perhaps we'll return there soon.

Space is full of wonders;
we learn more every day
trying to discover how it all began –
in the future, perhaps we may.