



At the end of these Night Sky activities students will understand:

- The Sun is a star
- The eight planets (including Earth) move around the Sun
- The Solar System is made up of the Sun and the planets orbiting it

Astronomy background information

The Sun is a star. It is made of gas and generates light and heat. In contrast, planets do not give out any light or heat of their own. We can only see the planets by the sunlight reflecting off them. The Sun's light and heat are essential for life on Earth. In order of distance from the Sun the planets are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Only Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the sky without a telescope. The only planet we cannot see in the sky is Earth!

The Sun is much larger than all the planets put together. The Sun has a strong gravitational pull which makes the planets move in orbit around the Sun. This movement is easily seen by watching the planets over several weeks. This can be simulated by speeding up time in the Night Sky app.

The Solar System consists of the Sun and the eight planets in orbit around it. As well as the planets, there are millions of much smaller objects including comets and asteroids in the Solar System.

Night Sky App Essential Settings

Go to Night Sky Settings  and make sure the following Preferences are set.

Turn On these Effects:

Environment Based Horizons

Turn Off these Effects:

Show Satellites
Show Ecliptic Line
Real Sky Representation
Show Glass Mythology
Show Constellation Lines
Stop Text and Lines Disappearing
Show Trajectories and Orbits

Accessible Learning:

- Text size can be increased in the Preferences section
- Star numbers can be reduced by sliding two fingers down the screen

