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Astronomy: Solar System

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Summery of Reading

Reviewing the book *The cosmic Perspective The solar system*, I learned various things that I had either forgotten or not known. This reading contained rich information over planets, asteroids, comets, flybys, and orbiters.

Some of the things that I learned about the planets in particular was that Venus is flipped up side down, and spins clock wise oppose to counter clock wise, which is what the rest of the planets in our solar system do. Aside from this all the planets revolve around the sun and are for the most part in the same plane. Another interesting fact to me was that there were two types of planets. There were Terrestrial and Jovian planets. The difference between the two is that *terrestrial* planets are rocky, and contain metals in the middle called *core*. These *Terrestrial* planets also are relatively small and dense when compared to their counterpart *Jovian* planets. *Jovian* planets are mostly made up elements that are classified as gasses and tend to be bigger in size yet significantly less dense.

Another section of the reading also talked about Asteroids and Comets. Asteroids are rocky and significantly smaller than planets, they are usually found revolving around the sun, between Mars and Jupiter, or in the Asteroid belt. Asteroids can thought as debris in our solar system. There are asteroids have been 60 miles in diameter, which is quite significant. Aside from Asteroids we have another section of debris called *comets*, which are not composed of rocks. Comets are mostly composed of ice, and contain sometimes contain other elements such as carbon dioxide, methane, and ammonia. They are usually found in the outskirts of our solar system closer to Pluto in a place called *Oort cloud.*

The reading also contained information on how we gather this type of information. Which introduced us to *Flybys* and *Orbiters*. Flybys are a type of spacecraft that tracks a certain planet in outer space but does not land on it. It simply follows it with ever entering a planets orbit. In contrast an *Orbiter* does get drawn in into a planets orbit and uses less fuel opposed to a flyby because it takes advantage of the planets gravity and gets pulled in. Aside from using less fuel, it is more common for an Orbiter to have more sophisticated hardware, such as radars of other computing technology used to study the planet.