



Fig. 17.17 : The solar system (not to scale)

Figure 17.17 shows a schematic view of the solar system.

I had read that there are nine planets in the solar system



Did you know?

Till 2006 there were nine planets in the solar system. Pluto was the farthest planet from the Sun.

In 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) adopted a new definition of a planet. Pluto does not fit this definition. It is no longer a planet of the solar system.

Let us know about some members of the solar family.

The Sun

The Sun is the nearest star from us. It is continuously emitting huge amounts

of heat and light. The Sun is the source of almost all energy on the Earth. In fact, the Sun is the main source of heat and light for all the planets.

The Planets

The planets look like stars, but they do not have light of their own. They merely reflect the sunlight that falls on them. Can you distinguish between planets and stars?

The simplest method of identifying planets from stars is that stars twinkle, whereas planets do not. Also the planets keep changing their positions with respect to the stars.

A planet has a definite path in which it revolves around the Sun. This path is called an **orbit**. The time taken by a planet to complete one revolution is called its period of revolution. The period