# Our Solar System Overview

Do you ever wonder about the things in the sky—the Sun, the Moon, the stars? People have been watching the sky for a long time, trying to figure out what is out there. We keep coming up with new ways to learn more about outer space.

*Planets* are big balls of rock or gas that move around stars. We live on one we call the Earth, which moves around a star we call the Sun. There are at least seven other planets moving around the Sun and a lot of other smaller things as well. All these things together are called a *system*. The Latin word for the Sun is *Sol*, so we call this system the *Solar System*.

In our *Solar System*, there are 9 big planets:

* Mercury
* Venus
* Earth
* Mars
* Jupiter
* Saturn
* Uranus
* Neptune
* Pluto

Also there are many comets. The most famous one is probably the **Halley’s** comet who comes around every 76 years.

Below is some data on the distances from the planets to Sun (these data are acquired from [NASA’s website](http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/profile.cfm?Object=SolarSys&Display=Overview));

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Average Distance (km) | Perihelion (closest) (km) | Aphelion (farthest) (km) |
| Mercury | 57,909,175 | 46,000,000 | 69,820,000 |
| Venus | 108,208,930 | 107,476,000 | 108,942,000 |
| Earth | 149,597,890 | 147,100,000 | 152,100,000 |
| Mars | 227,936,640 | 206,600,000 | 249,200,000 |
| Jupiter | 778,412,020 | 740,742,600 | 816,081,400 |
| Saturn | 1,426,725,400 | 1,349,467,000 | 1,503,983,000 |
| Uranus | 2,870,972,200 | 2,735,560,000 | 3,006,390,000 |
| Neptune | 4,498,252,900 | 4,459,630,000 | 4,536,870,000 |
| Pluto | 5,906,380,000 | 4,436,820,000 | 7,375,930,000 |

To show visually how far each planet is from the sun, here is a line chart[[1]](#footnote-1):

1. Note that the Perihelion of Pluto is closer to the Aphelion of **Neptune**. So it is sometime that Pluto is travelling inside of **Neptune**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)