

# Frequently Asked Questions about SUN and Solar System

250 Administrator Tue, Jan 19, 2010 [General Knowledge](#) 0 5436

## **What is the Sun?**

The Sun is just an ordinary star, one of billions of stars in the Universe. The Sun has a special name and is important to us because it is close enough to give Earth light and warmth. This light and warmth is what allows plants, animals and other living things to survive on our planet. Without the Sun there would be no life on Earth.

## **How hot is the Sun?**

The temperature at the core, or centre, of the Sun is about 16 million degrees Celsius. From the core, this incredible heat energy flows to the surface, where the temperature is closer to 6000 degrees Celsius. This is still so incredibly hot that it would melt anything it touched.

## **Why is the Sun so bright?**

The Sun is the brightest object in the sky because it is a giant ball of brightly glowing gas. Light from the Sun takes just over eight minutes to reach Earth, but when it gets here it is still so powerful that the light can damage your eyesight. That is why you should never look at the Sun directly and always wear sunglasses on sunny days.

## **When do solar eclipses happen?**

The Moon travels around Earth. A solar eclipse happens when the Moon comes in between the Sun and the Earth and casts a huge shadow onto the Earth. A total eclipse is rare, but when it happens, the Sun seems to disappear from the sky and for a few moments everything becomes cold and dark.

## **What is the solar system?**

The Solar system consists of the Sun and the planets that move around the Sun in oval paths called orbits. A planet is a vast ball of rock or gas that travels in orbit around a star. There are other objects in our solar system too, such as moons and asteroids.

### **Did you know?**

The Sun is so far away that if you tried to drive there, travelling at 100 kilometers an hour, it would take 170 years to reach your destination!

### **How far are we from the Sun?**

Earth is 150 million kilometers away from the Sun. this means that our planet is far enough away from the Sun for water to be liquid. If Earth were closer and, therefore, warmer, water would turn to gas, and if it were farther away, water would become ice. It is Earth's distance from the Sun that makes it the only planet in the solar system that is known to support life.

### **Why do planets orbit the Sun?**

The planets move around the Sun because the Sun is so big that its gravity is very powerful. Gravity is the force that pulls the planets towards the Sun. it is strong enough to hold all the planets in the solar system in their orbits, moving around the Sun in the same direction.

### **When did Earth form?**

Earth and the other planets formed about five billion years ago. Our planet was born from dust and gases whirling in orbit around the Sun as it was forming. In the intense heat, the dust and gases collided and hardened into a ball of rock. Even today, Earth is still hit by dust from space and occasional large piece of rock.

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