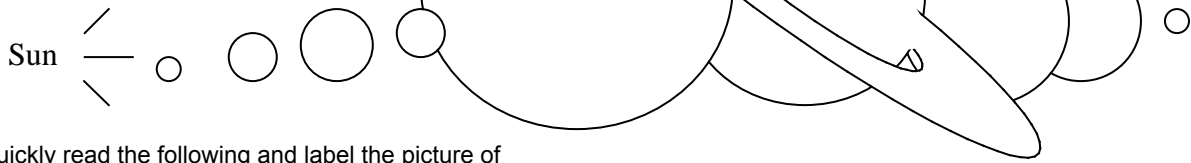


The Planets



1. Quickly read the following and label the picture of the nine planets.

Earth is the third planet from the Sun and the fifth largest in the solar system. It's the only planet whose name is not taken from Greek or Roman mythology.

Neptune is named after the Roman God of the Sea because of its blue colour, this is the fourth largest planet and is the eighth planet from the Sun.

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and nearly the smallest. It was named after the Roman God of Commerce and Travel, whose Greek counterpart was Hermes, the winged messenger.

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and the seventh largest planet. It's named after the Roman God of War and is sometimes called *The Red Planet*.

Pluto is the furthest from the Sun and the smallest planet, named after the Roman God of the Underworld, perhaps because it is in constant darkness.

Venus is named after the goddess of love and beauty and is the second closest planet to the Sun.

Jupiter's name is taken from the king of the Roman gods and it's the fifth planet from the Sun.

At 1,429 million km from the Sun, **Saturn's** the sixth closest and the second largest planet. It's named after the Roman God of Agriculture.

Uranus is the third largest planet and seventh from the Sun. It was named after the Roman God who was father to Saturn.

2. Each of the paragraphs below refers to one of these planets. Write the name of the planet next to each. Check your answers with a partner.

(1) It's the largest planet - 318 times the size of Earth and twice the size of all the other planets put together. Of its 39 satellites, the most famous are the four large moons *Io*, *Europa*, *Ganymede* and *Callisto*, which were discovered by Galileo in 1610. It is famous for its Great Red Spot, which is about the size of two Earths.

(2) We first visited this planet in 1965. The average temperature on this planet is -55°C . There are some very high mountains and volcanoes such as *Olympus Mons*, which (at 24km high) is the highest mountain in the solar

system. There are red dust storms that can last for months on this planet. It has two satellites, named *Phobos* and *Deimos*.

(3) We first visited this planet in 1979. It's the least dense of all the planets and it's made up of 75% hydrogen and 25% helium. As with all the gas planets, it radiates more energy than it receives from the sun. It is most famous for its rings and was until recently believed to be the only planet which had rings.

(4) We visited this planet in 1989 and discovered that this planet has six more moons than the two which were previously known about. The largest moon of this planet is called *Triton*, (another god of the sea). Like Jupiter and Saturn, it radiates nearly twice as much energy as it receives from the sun. It orbits the sun every 165 years.

(5) It's the densest planet in the solar system. 71% of the surface of this planet is covered in water. Its atmosphere is made up of about 77% nitrogen and 21% oxygen and it orbits the sun every 365 days.

(6) This planet has no known satellites and the temperature fluctuates considerably, although there is evidence of water at the north pole. Even though it's closer to the sun than Venus, Venus is still slightly hotter. The only planet denser than this one is Earth.

(7) First visited in 1962, this is the brightest object in the sky apart from the Sun and the Moon. It appears to be very similar to Earth. However, the surface pressure is 90 atmospheres, which is the equivalent of the pressure on a diver a kilometre deep in an Earth ocean. Despite being further from the sun than Mercury, the temperature on this planet is hotter. It has no known satellites.

(8) It was the first of the planets discovered in modern times (1781) and was originally named after its discoverer *Sir William Herschel* but was later changed to that of the Roman God. We first visited this planet in 1986 and discovered the presence of more than 20 moons. The two largest, *Titania* and *Oberon* are named after characters in the writings of *William Shakespeare*. It is slightly larger in diameter than neighbouring Neptune.

(9) At the time of its discovery, in 1930, this dark, cold planet was seen together with its moon, *Charon*, and thought to be bigger than it is. With a diameter of 2274km, it is a tiny planet and many suggest it is an asteroid or comet rather than a planet. With a temperature of between -235°C and -210°C , it is made of rock and covered in frozen gas.