

Outer Planets

Note-taking Guide - Answer Key

outer, jovian, Neptune, Uranus, rocky matter, rings, side, winds, smallest, Sun, storm, ninth, atmosphere, Jupiter, cores, Mars, poles, Saturn, 300, Venus, spots, asteroid belt, gas, bigger, telescope

Jupiter, the fifth planet from the Sun, is the biggest planet. It is 318 times bigger than Earth.

Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are called the outer planets. This is because they are farther away from the Sun than the inner planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.

The outer planets and the inner planets are separated by the asteroid belt.

This belt is made of rocky objects that orbit the Sun between Mars and Jupiter.

The outer planets are also called jovian planets, which means Jupiter-like. They are made of gas and are huge.

Because they are mostly made of gas, they do not have a solid surface—except maybe at their cores.

You can recognize Jupiter by its colorful stripes, swirls, and spots.

Like all the other jovian planets, Jupiter also has rings circling it, but they are very difficult to see.

The red spot is actually a storm.

This storm has been raging on Jupiter for at least 300 years!

The sixth planet from the Sun is Saturn.

You can actually see Saturn's large, bright rings through a telescope.

Saturn's rings are made of rocky matter and ice.

The seventh planet from the Sun is Uranus.

Fast winds blow on Uranus creating bands of color in its atmosphere.

Uranus's poles point toward the Sun, while the Earth's poles do not!

That is why Uranus rotates on its side.

The eighth planet from the Sun is Neptune.

Neptune is the smallest of the four jovian planets, but it is still way bigger than Earth and all the other terrestrial planets.

Neptune has a thick gas atmosphere like Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus.

The fastest winds in the solar system have been recorded on Neptune.

For a long time, scientists thought Pluto was the ninth planet.

But in 2003, scientists discovered Eris. Eris is actually bigger than Pluto.

Scientists decided that Pluto is not truly a planet because it is not big enough. Also, Pluto does not travel around the Sun in an almost circular path as the other planets do.