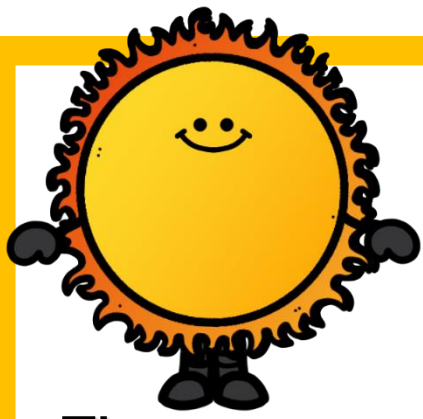


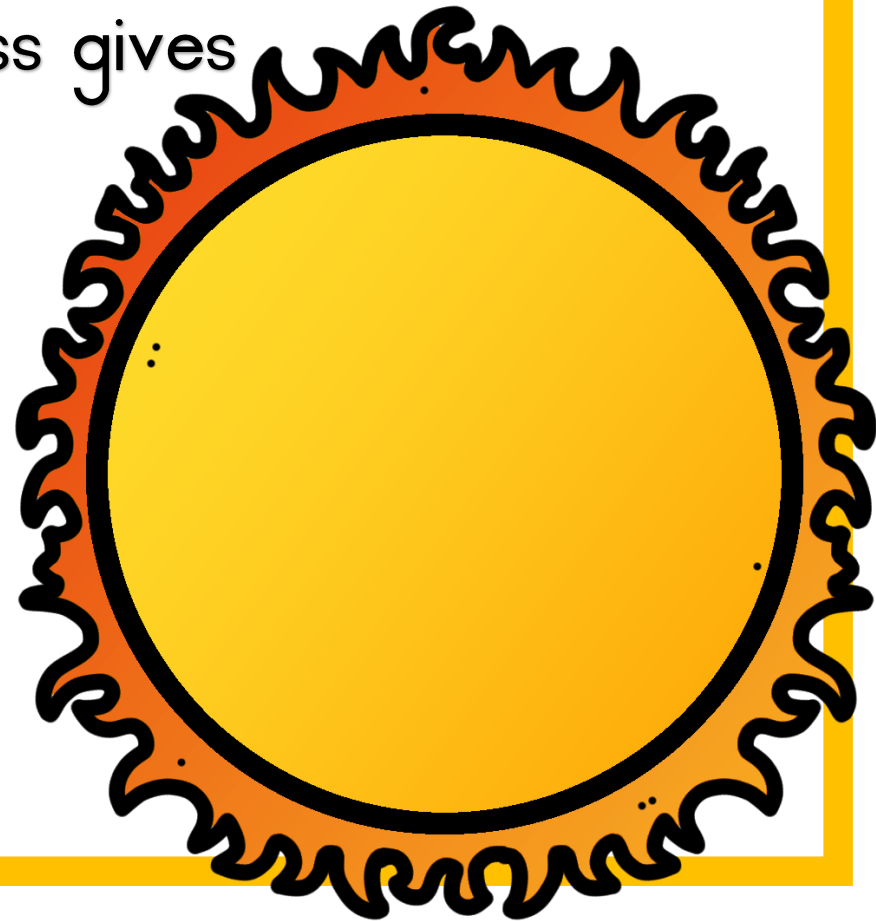
The earth is the big ball
or sphere on which we
live. We call everything
around it space or the
universe.





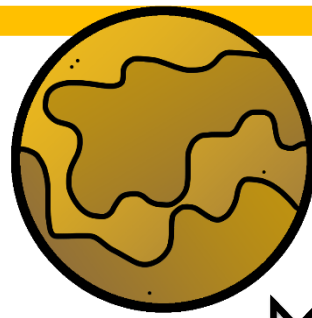
The sun

The sun is a very, very hot ball of gas. Deep inside the sun, it is so intensely hot that gases "melt" together. This "melting" process gives us light, heat and energy on earth. The sun is a star and it is the centre of our Solar System.



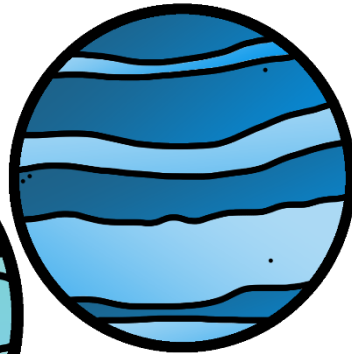
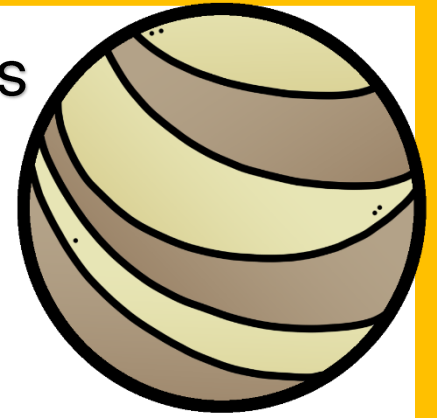
Planets

There are 8 planets,
including the
earth.



Mercury

Venus



Earth



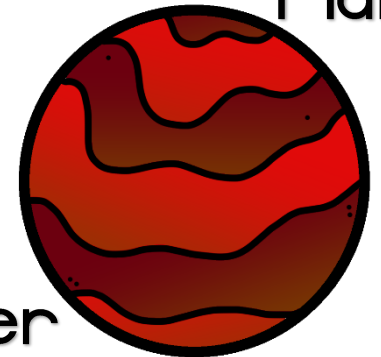
Neptune

Uranus

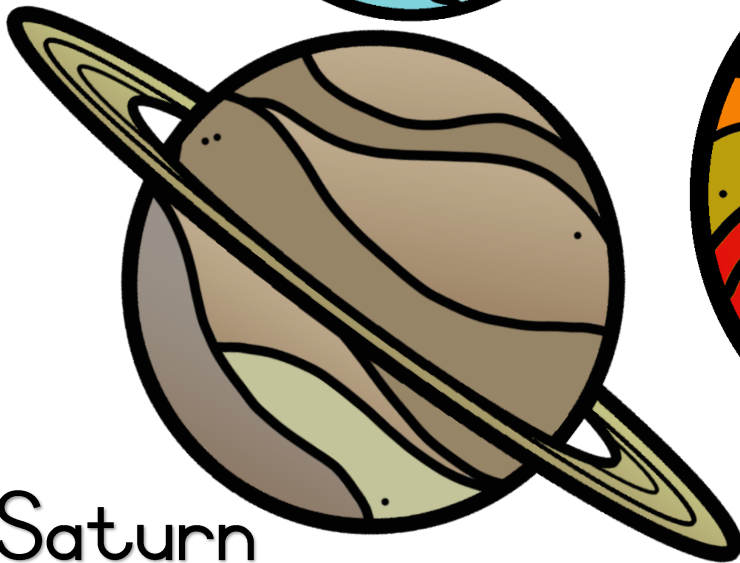


Jupiter

Mars



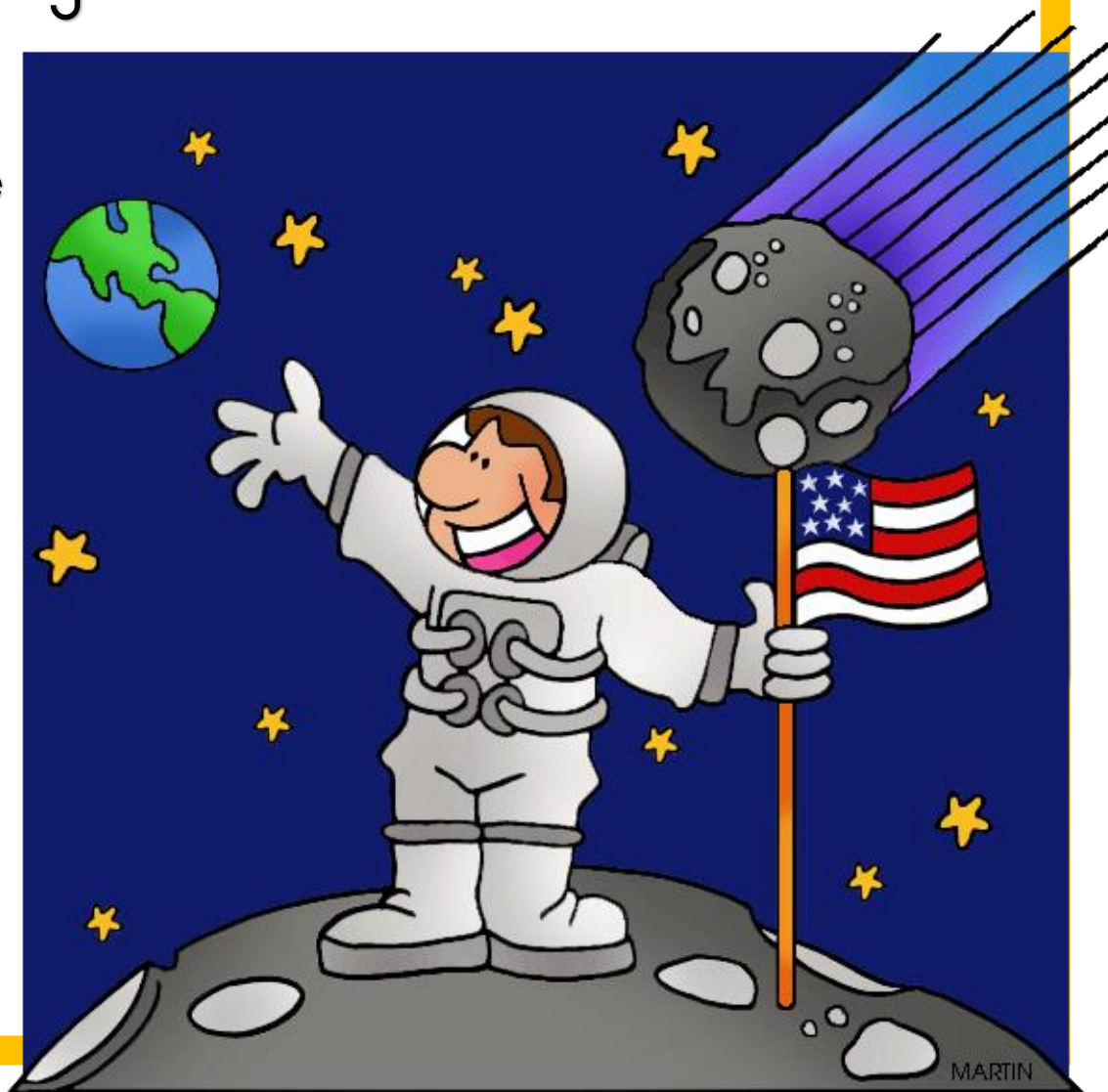
Saturn





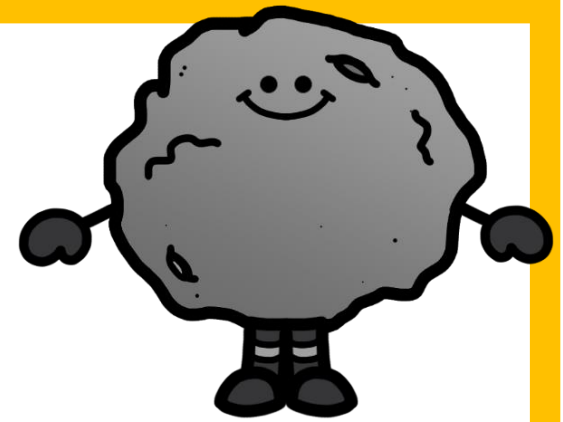
Meteors

Meteors are big chunks of rocks. When they hit the atmosphere, they become very hot and burn out. When they start melting they form a glowing stripe in the night sky. We call them "shooting stars". If they hit the surface of the earth before completely burnt out, we call them "meteorites".



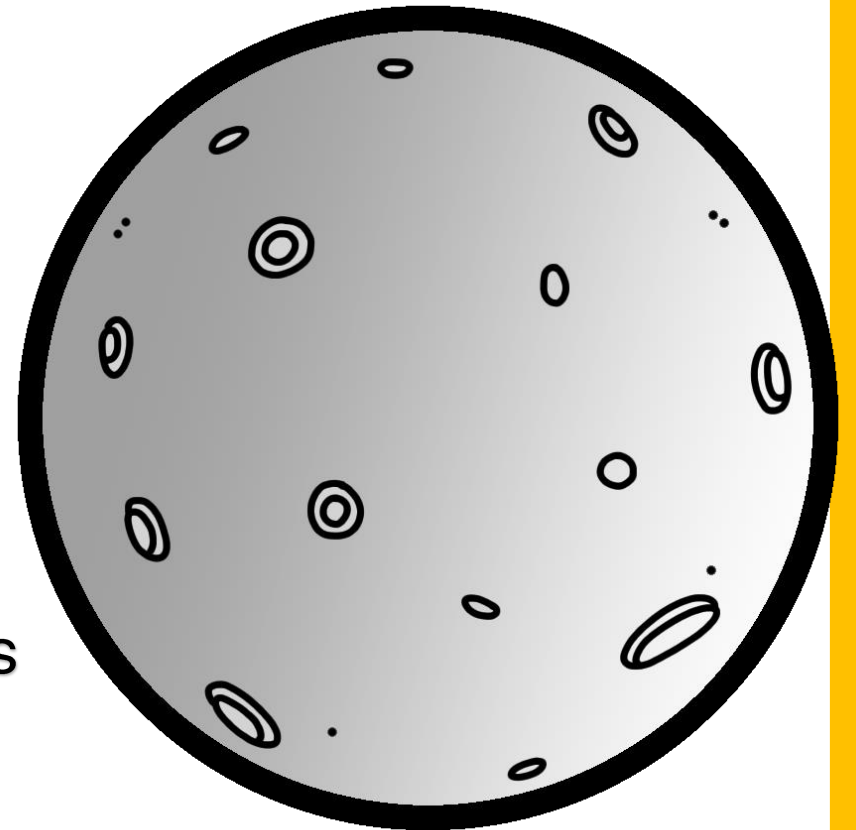
Comets

Comets are chunks of ice and gas that travel in large orbits through the Solar System. They regularly come close to the sun.



The moon

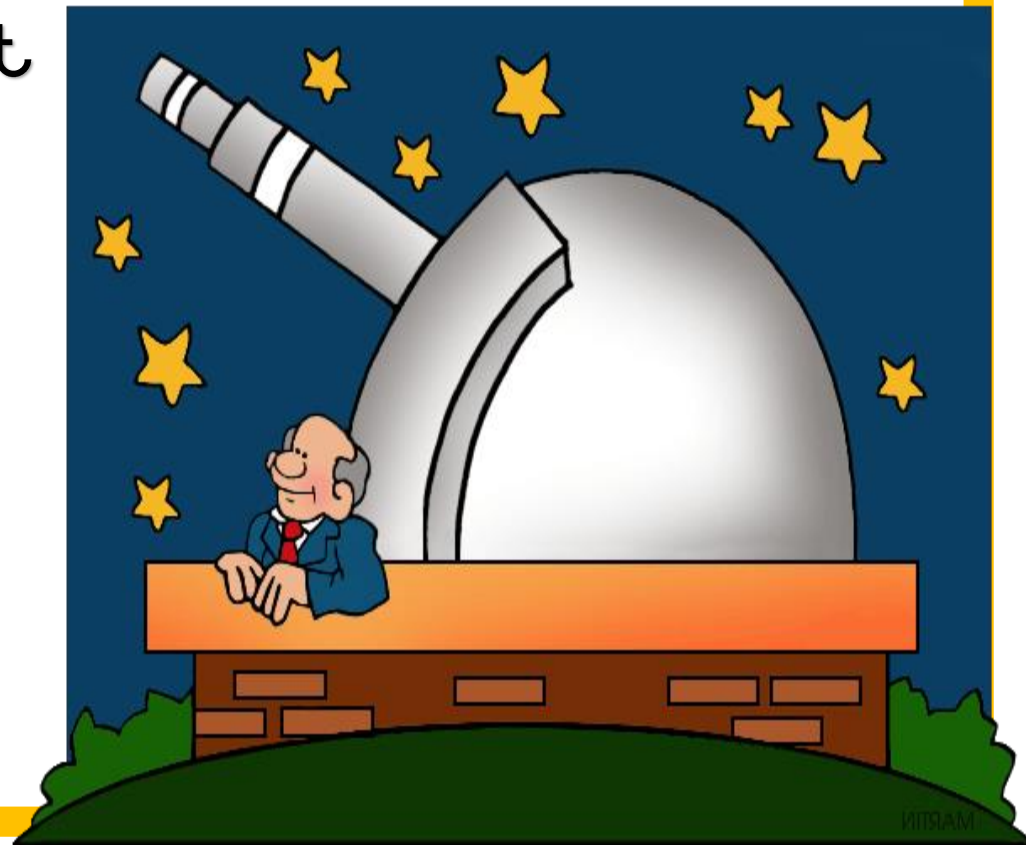
The moon is a cold, dead ball of rock and dust that revolves around the earth. It is 4 times smaller than the earth.



Stars



Stars are intensely hot balls of gas, like the sun, but they are very far from us. There are billions of stars. We could never count them all. Stars come in many different sizes, our sun is a medium - sized star.





Telescopes

People who study the universe are called astronomers.

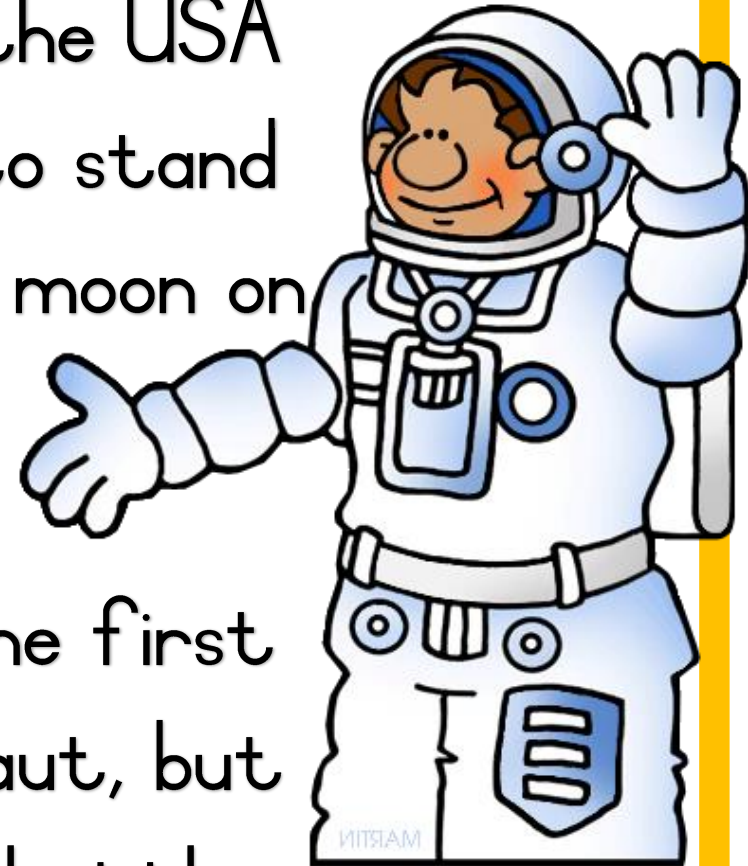
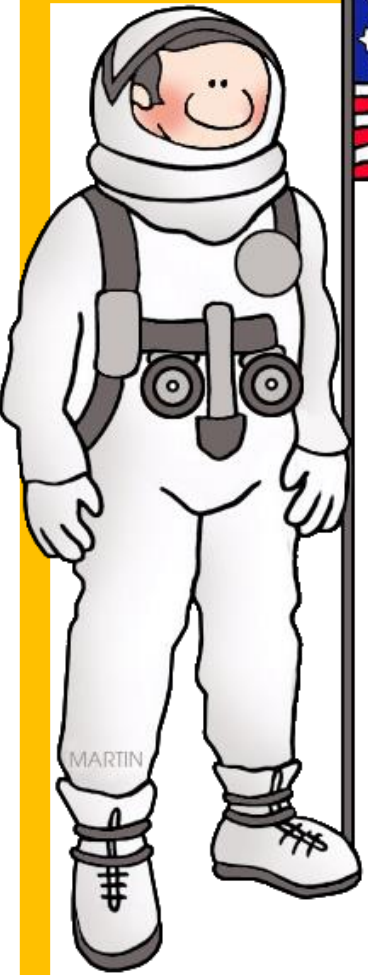
Today we even have telescopes far
In space that can send us pictures
of very distant parts of the
universe that we cannot see from
earth.

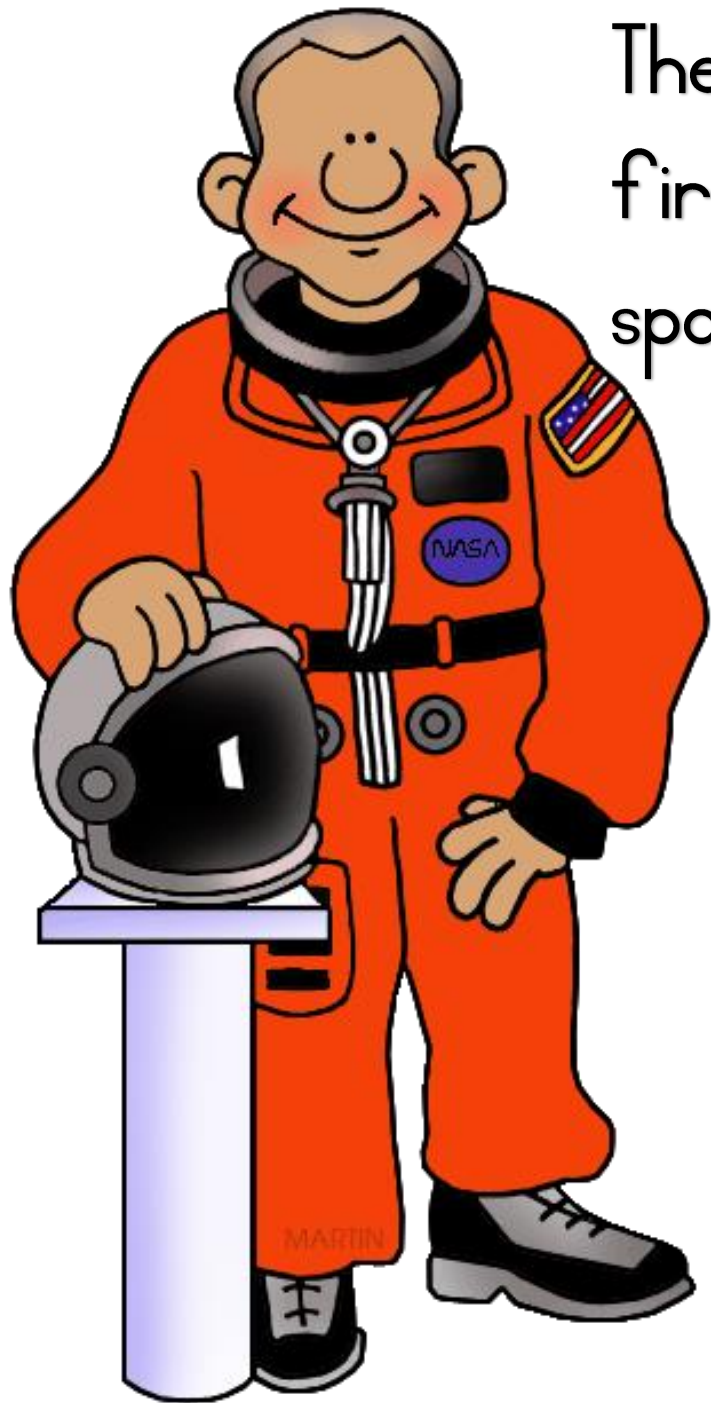


Space travel

Niel Armstrong from the USA was the first person to stand on the surface of the moon on 20 July 1969.

Christa McAuliffe was the first teacher to be an astronaut, but she died when the space shuttle, Challenger, exploded on 28 January 1986.





The Russian, Yuri Gagarin, was the first person to orbit the earth in a space craft on 12 April 1961.

Mark Shuttleworth was the first South African to orbit the earth in April 2002.

Satellites

An object that travels around something else is called a satellite. Therefore the moon is a satellite of the earth. The path of a satellite is called its orbit. There are many artificial satellites that have been sent into orbit around the earth by human beings.

