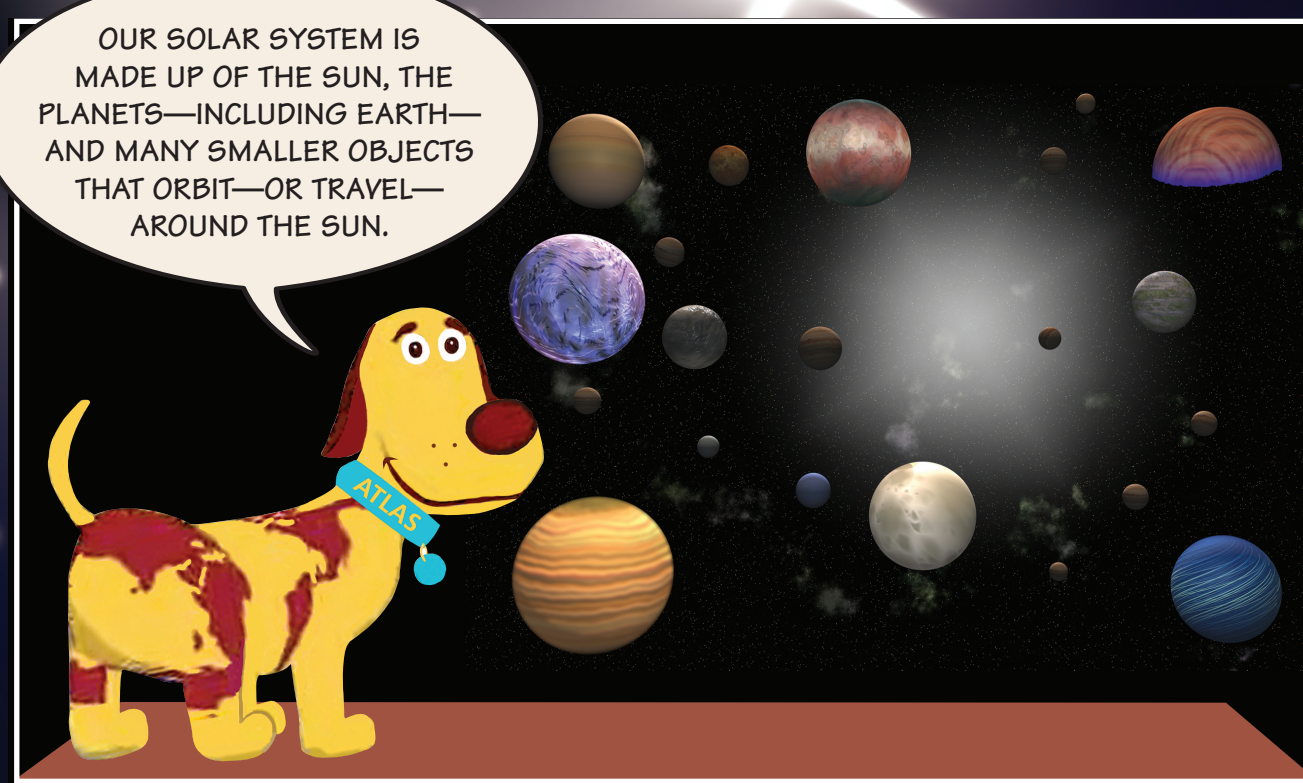


Atlas Explains

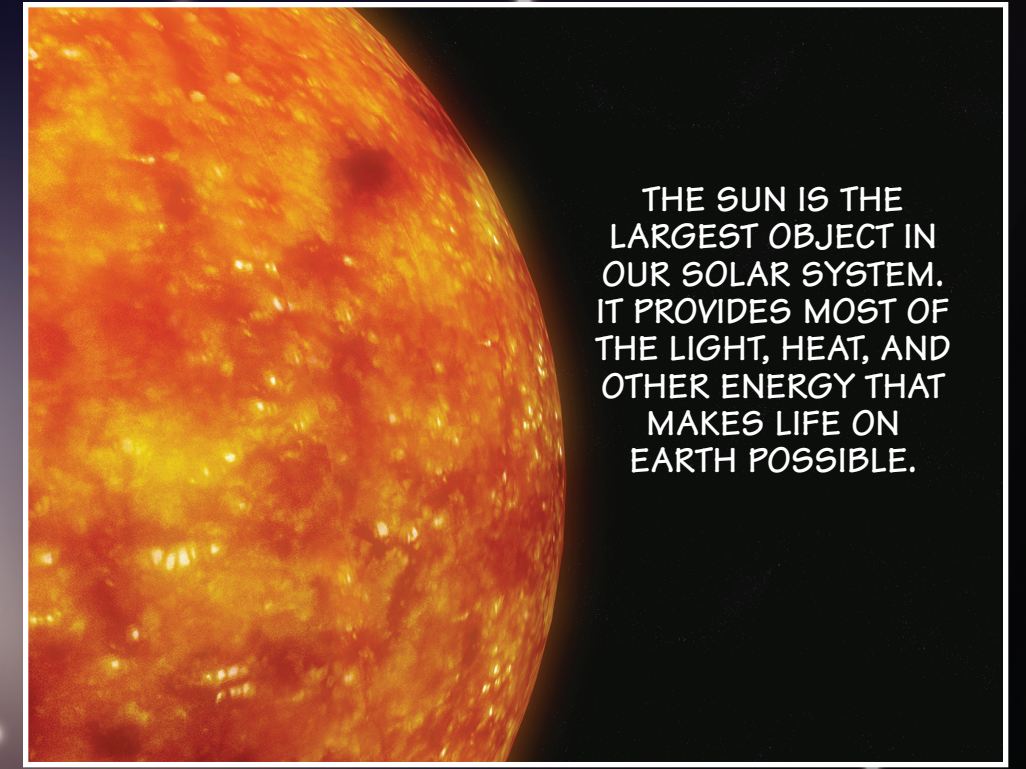
THE SOLAR SYSTEM



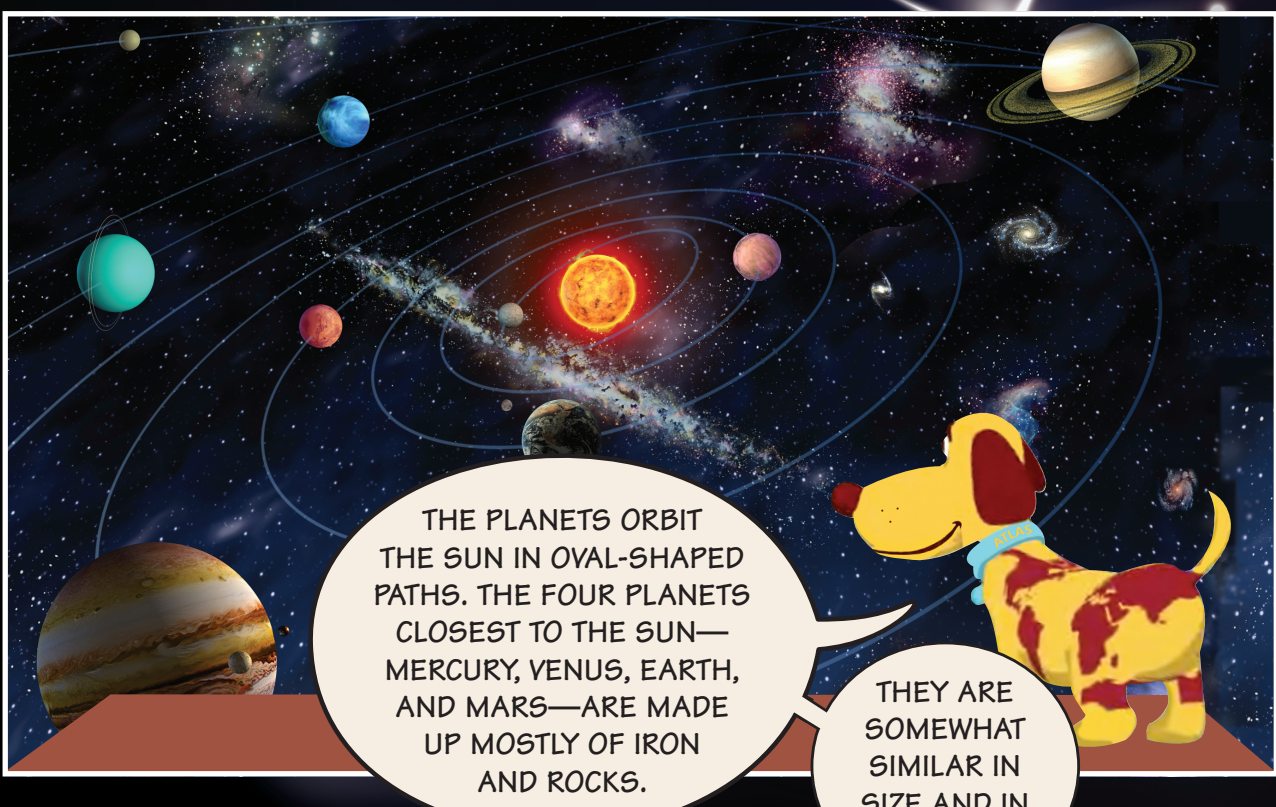
THIS IS A GALAXY CALLED THE MILKY WAY. A GALAXY IS A SYSTEM OF STARS, DUST, AND GAS HELD TOGETHER BY GRAVITY. THE MILKY WAY IS WHERE OUR SOLAR SYSTEM IS LOCATED.



OUR SOLAR SYSTEM IS MADE UP OF THE SUN, THE PLANETS—INCLUDING EARTH—AND MANY SMALLER OBJECTS THAT ORBIT—OR TRAVEL—AROUND THE SUN.

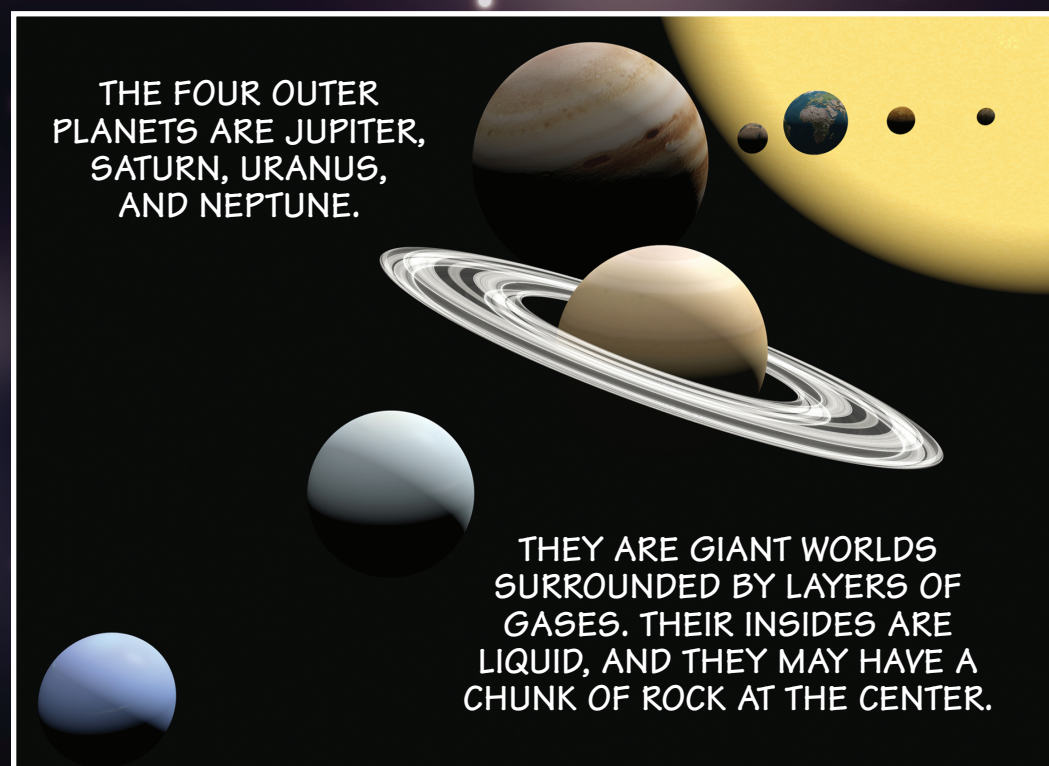


THE SUN IS THE LARGEST OBJECT IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM. IT PROVIDES MOST OF THE LIGHT, HEAT, AND OTHER ENERGY THAT MAKES LIFE ON EARTH POSSIBLE.



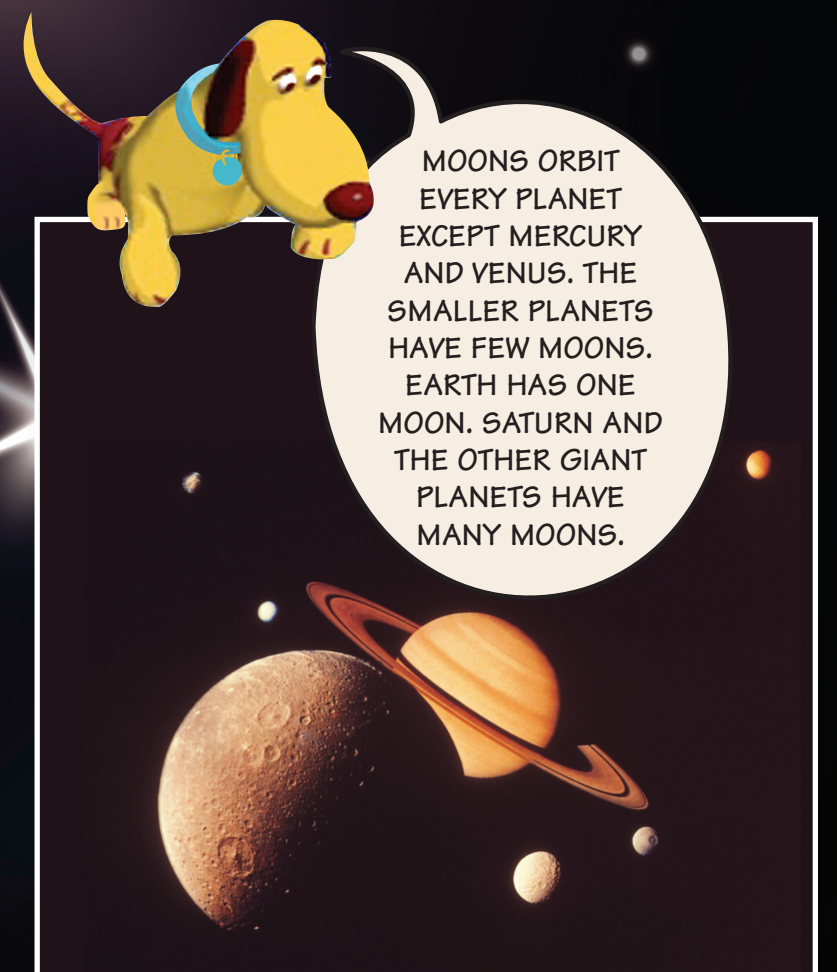
THE PLANETS ORBIT THE SUN IN OVAL-SHAPED PATHS. THE FOUR PLANETS CLOSEST TO THE SUN—MERCURY, VENUS, EARTH, AND MARS—ARE MADE UP MOSTLY OF IRON AND ROCKS.

THEY ARE SOMEWHAT SIMILAR IN SIZE AND IN MAKEUP.

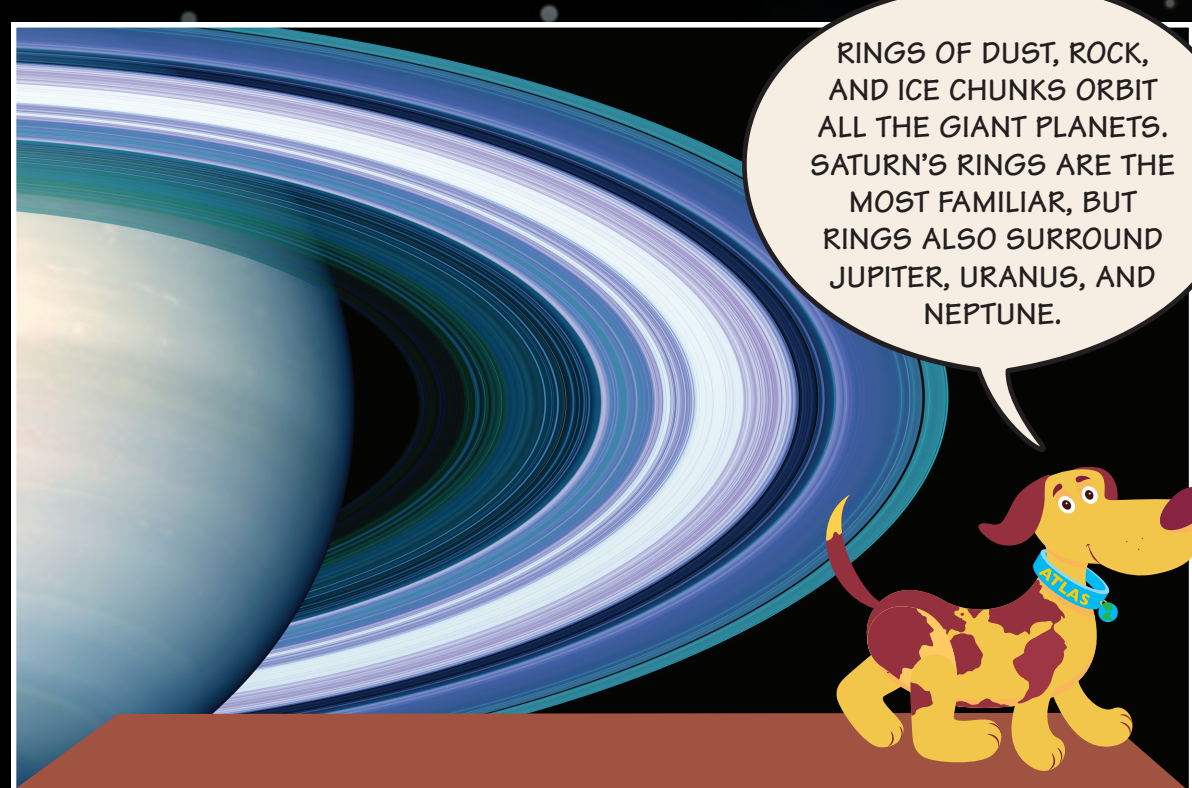


THE FOUR OUTER PLANETS ARE JUPITER, SATURN, URANUS, AND NEPTUNE.

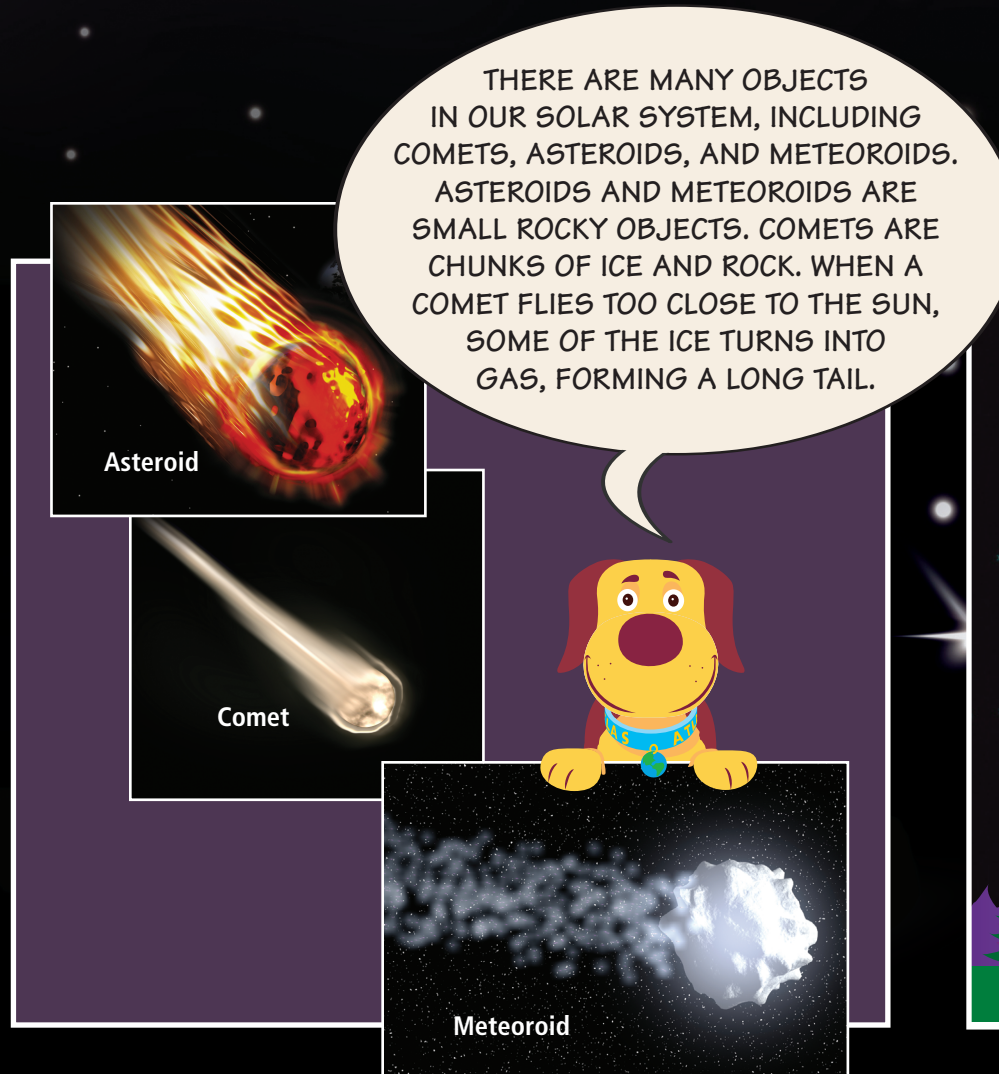
THEY ARE GIANT WORLDS SURROUNDED BY LAYERS OF GASES. THEIR INSIDES ARE LIQUID, AND THEY MAY HAVE A CHUNK OF ROCK AT THE CENTER.



MOONS ORBIT EVERY PLANET EXCEPT MERCURY AND VENUS. THE SMALLER PLANETS HAVE FEW MOONS. EARTH HAS ONE MOON. SATURN AND THE OTHER GIANT PLANETS HAVE MANY MOONS.



RINGS OF DUST, ROCK, AND ICE CHUNKS ORBIT ALL THE GIANT PLANETS. SATURN'S RINGS ARE THE MOST FAMILIAR, BUT RINGS ALSO SURROUND JUPITER, URANUS, AND NEPTUNE.



THERE ARE MANY OBJECTS IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, INCLUDING COMETS, ASTEROIDS, AND METEOROIDS. ASTEROIDS AND METEOROIDS ARE SMALL ROCKY OBJECTS. COMETS ARE CHUNKS OF ICE AND ROCK. WHEN A COMET FLIES TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN, SOME OF THE ICE TURNS INTO GAS, FORMING A LONG TAIL.

Asteroid

Comet

Meteoroid



SCIENTISTS CALLED ASTRONOMERS USE POWERFUL TELESCOPES TO STUDY THE SUN, PLANETS, AND OTHER HEAVENLY BODIES. BUT YOU DON'T NEED A TELESCOPE TO SEE OUR SOLAR SYSTEM. YOU CAN SEE THE EARTH'S MOON, COMETS, METEORS, AND SOME PLANETS IN THE NIGHT SKY.

 WORLD BOOK

Find out more about the solar system on *World Book Kids* at www.worldbookonline.com/kids/