

Name and surname:

Date:

Group:

1.- *Reading and comprehension: Our Solar System*

From our small world we have gazed upon the cosmic ocean for thousands of years. Ancient astronomers observed points of light that appeared to move among the stars. They called these objects planets, meaning wanderers, and named them after Roman deities: Jupiter, king of the gods; Mars, the god of war; Mercury, messenger of the gods; Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, and Saturn, father of Jupiter and god of agriculture. The ancient astronomers (stargazers) also observed comets with sparkling tails, and meteors or shooting stars apparently falling from the sky.

Since the invention of the telescope, three more planets have been discovered in our solar system: Uranus (1781), Neptune (1846), and Pluto (1930). Pluto was reclassified as a dwarf planet in 2006. In addition, our solar system is populated by thousands of small bodies such as asteroids and comets. Most of the asteroids orbit in a region between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, while the home of comets lies far beyond the orbit of Pluto, in the Oort Cloud.

The four planets closest to the Sun (Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars) are called the terrestrial planets because they have solid rocky surfaces. The four large planets beyond the orbit of Mars (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune) are called gas giants. Tiny and distant, Pluto has a solid but icier surface than the terrestrial planets.

There are 144 known natural satellites (also called moons) in orbit around the planets in our solar system. Many of these were discovered by planetary spacecraft. There are currently 22 recently discovered moons awaiting final approval before being added to our solar system's moon count.

Ancient astronomers believed that the Earth was the center of the Universe, and that the Sun and all the other stars revolved around the Earth. Copernicus proved that Earth and the other planets in our solar system orbit our Sun.

2.- *Memorise these facts:*

- 1) A planet is a celestial body orbiting a star.
- 2) The planets were originally seen as emissaries of the gods.
- 3) With the development of the telescope, the planets, which now included Earth, were found to orbit the Sun.
- 4) There are eight planets in the Solar System: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn; Uranus and Neptune.
- 5) There are at least three dwarf planets: Ceres, Pluto and Eris.