

TRUE OR FALSE?

Lead-in activity

Before reading *A Little Blue Dot* point out the title, author/illustrator and read the blurb on the front and back covers. Study the front cover and ask:

- Can you describe the cover?
- What do you think the book will be about?
- What is the Little Blue Dot the title might be referring to?

Main activity

Once you have read *A Little Blue Dot* you can play this true or false game so they can see how much they have learned. Tell them you are going to read out a fact and they need to decide if it's true or false. If you are playing in a classroom, they could raise their hands, or move to a side of the classroom. They could work in teams to discuss their answers and a spokesperson could say their answer, just like University Challenge.

Question 1:

Mercury is a very hot planet both in the day and night. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 2:

Venus is the brightest planet in the sky. You can often see her without a telescope. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 3:

Humans have sent over 40 probes and one helicopter to explore and photograph Mars. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 4:

The first planet humans will probably be able to fly up to visit is Jupiter. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 5:

Saturn has more moons than any other planet. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 6:

The 'big red spot' on Jupiter is a volcano called Olympic Mons. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 7:

Saturn's rings are made up of billions of ice crystals. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 8:

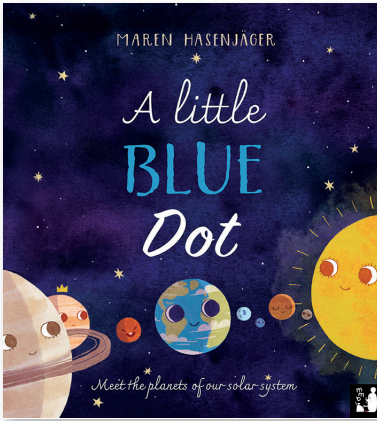
Uranus lies on his side. TRUE or FALSE?

Question 9:

A day on Neptune is 24 hours – the same as Earth's TRUE or FALSE?

Question 10:

Pluto is the the largest planet. TRUE or FALSE?



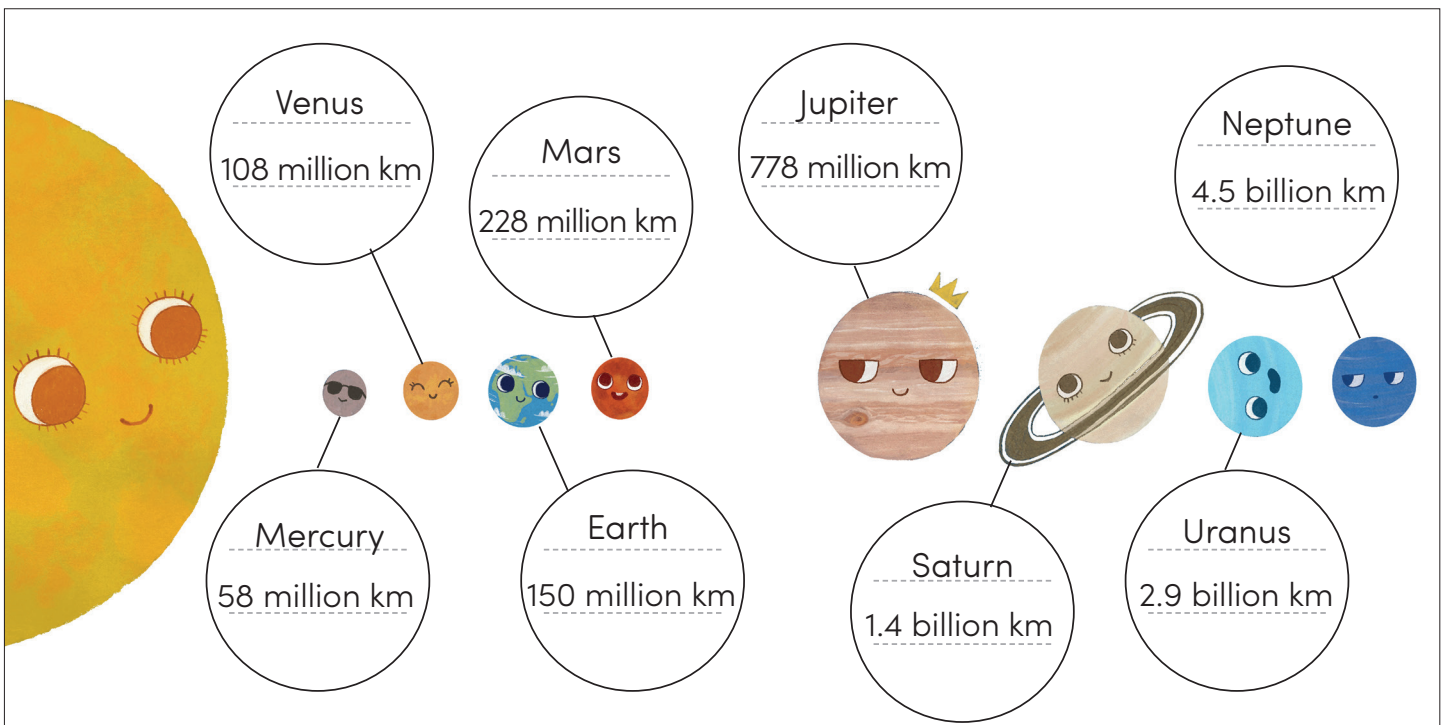
MEET THE PLANETS label and colour

Lead-in activity

Talk about the end pages of *A Little Blue Dot*. Earth is sad at the beginning of the book and happy at the end. Talk about all the planets and their place in our solar system, with Mercury closest to the Sun and Neptune the farthest.

Main activity 1 - Label the solar system

Print out the next page and ask the children to write in the names of each planet and its distance from the Sun using the information given, or they could cut out the information and stick it on the sheet.



Main activity 2 - Colour the solar system

Print out the second page and ask the children to colour in the Sun and the planets. They can add stars and rockets and alien space craft too.

LABEL THE SOLAR SYSTEM

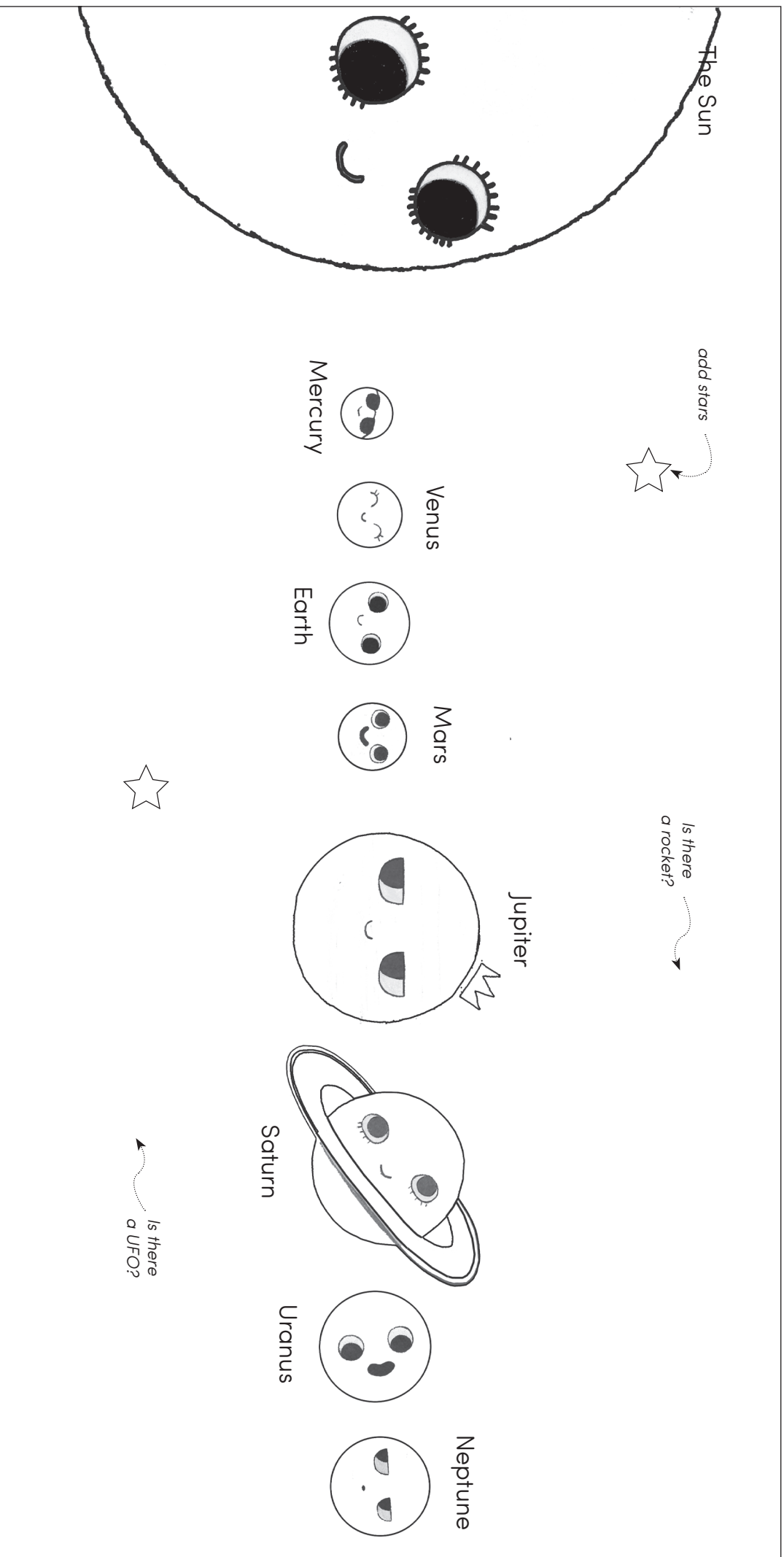
Word bank

Venus	Saturn	Mars	Earth	Mercury	Jupiter	Neptune	Uranus
58 million km	108 million km	150 million km	228 million km	778 million km	1.4 billion km	2.9 billion km	4.5 billion km

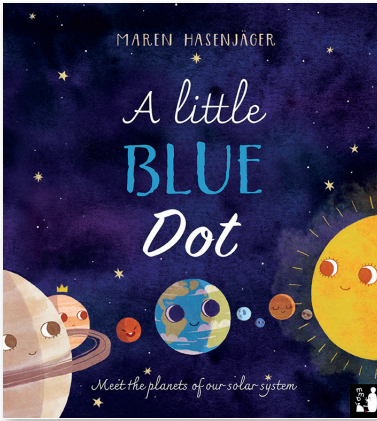
Name _____

COLOUR THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Look at the book to see what the planets look like and colour them in. What else might you see in space?



Name



MNEMONIC

Main activity

A mnemonic is an easy way to remember the order of the planets, starting with the closest to the sun to the farthest away. Mnemonics are silly sentences where the first letter of each word matches the first letter of whatever you're trying to remember. Here are some for the planets. Read them out and ask the children to choose their favourite to learn. They can draw a picture to help them remember it, or they can make up their own.

My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles

Many Very Elderly Men Just Snooze Under Newspapers

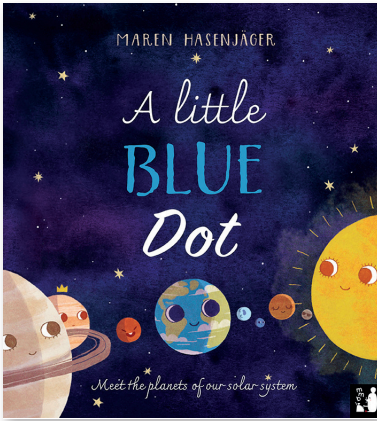
My Vicious Earthworm Might Just Swallow Us Now



Mercury • Venus • Earth • Mars • Jupiter • Saturn • Uranus • Neptune

Mnemonic _____

Name _____



CREATIVE WRITING

Main activity

At the end of *A Little Blue Dot* the child tells Earth why she is 'exactly right for us'. The child lists some of the fantastic things that Earth has that the other planets don't have. Using the letters in Earth, make a list of all the things that are special and unique, and then write an acrostic poem using those words. Here are some examples:

Every little thing!
All over the Earth
Rightfully has a place
To thrive and grow
Here on this paradise

Exactly right for us!
Ant and zebras and everything in between
Rivers and oceans give us all the water we need
Trees and flowers help us to breathe
Humans who love and take care of our planet



ACROSTIC POEM

E _____

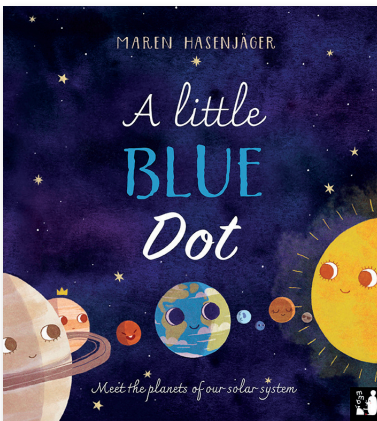
A _____

R _____

T _____

H _____

Name _____



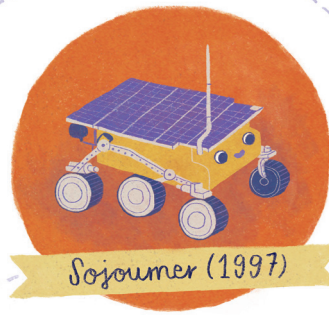
DESIGN A SPACE PROBE

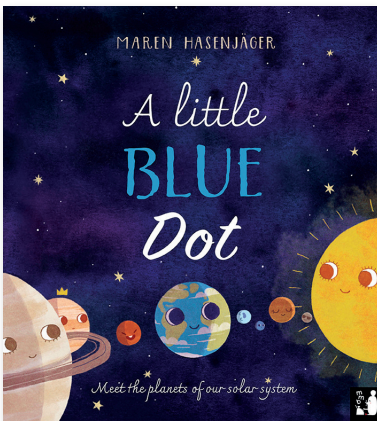
Lead-in activity

So far, more than 40 probes have been sent to Mars but not all of them have arrived. Some are designed to orbit the planet. Others land and stay in one spot. Others have tracks, wheels or wings to move around.

Main activity

Design and draw your own space probe using these real probes as inspiration. Don't forget to name it too.





TOP TRUMPS THE PLANETS (AND ONE DWARF PLANET)

Main activity

Cut out the cards on the next sheet and shuffle them up. Here's how to play:

1. Each player picks a card from the pile.
2. The youngest player goes first and reads out the fact that they think will 'trump' the other child's card.
3. The winner keeps both cards.
4. Continue play until all the cards have been used.
5. The winner is the player with the most cards.

EXAMPLE

JUPITER	NEPTUNE
DISTANCE: 778 million km	DISTANCE: 4.5 billion km
DIAMETER: 142,984 km	DIAMETER: 49,528 km
MOONS: 95+	MOONS: 16+
ROTATION: 11 years, 315 days	ROTATION: 165 years
DAY LENGTH: 9 hours 55mins	DAY LENGTH: 15 hours, 58 mins

Choose DISTANCE, Neptune wins
Choose DIAMETER, Jupiter wins
Choose MOONS, Jupiter wins
Choose ROTATION, Neptune wins
Choose DAY LENGTH, Neptune wins



MERCURY

DISTANCE:	58 million km
DIAMETER:	4,880 km
MOONS:	0
ORBIT:	88 days
DAY LENGTH:	58 days, 15 h, 36 m



VENUS

DISTANCE:	108 million km
DIAMETER:	12,100 km
MOONS:	0
ORBIT:	225 days
DAY LENGTH:	243 days



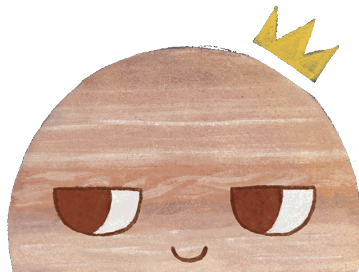
EARTH

DISTANCE:	150 million km
DIAMETER:	12,735 km
MOONS:	1
ORBIT:	365 days
DAY LENGTH:	23 hours 56 mins



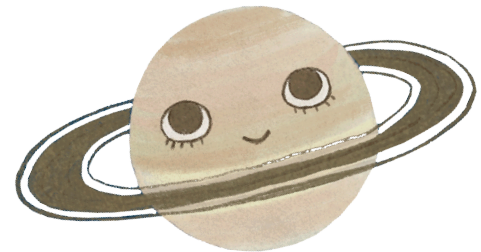
MARS

DISTANCE:	228 million km
DIAMETER:	6,790 km
MOONS:	2
ORBIT:	687 days
DAY LENGTH:	1 day, 37 mins



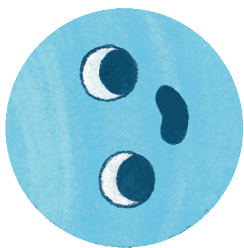
JUPITER

DISTANCE:	778 million km
DIAMETER:	142,984 km
MOONS:	95+
ORBIT:	11 years, 315 days
DAY LENGTH:	9 hours 55 mins



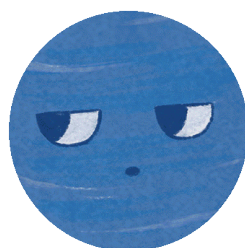
SATURN

DISTANCE:	1.4 billion km
DIAMETER:	120,536 km
MOONS:	146+
ORBIT:	29 years, 166 days
DAY LENGTH:	10 hours 47 mins



URANUS

DISTANCE:	2.9 billion km
DIAMETER:	51,118 km
MOONS:	28+
ORBIT:	84 years
DAY LENGTH:	17 hours, 14 mins



NEPTUNE

DISTANCE:	4.5 billion km
DIAMETER:	49,528 km
MOONS:	16+
ORBIT:	165 years
DAY LENGTH:	15 hours, 58 mins



PLUTO (DWARF)

DISTANCE:	5.9 billion km
DIAMETER:	2,377 km
MOONS:	5
ORBIT:	248 years
DAY LENGTH:	153 hours