



# Exploring the Solar System

*Read the passage below and answer the questions on the next page.*

The solar system is a fascinating and complex system. It includes the Sun, eight planets, numerous moons, and other celestial objects like asteroids and comets. All these bodies move in space in an orderly manner, bound by the Sun's gravity.

## The Sun: The Star in Our Backyard

At the center of our solar system is the Sun. The Sun is a star, and it's the most important source of energy for life on Earth. It makes up about 99.86% of the solar system's total mass.

## The Planets: Different Worlds

There are eight planets in our solar system, divided into two groups: the inner and outer planets. The inner planets - Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars - are closer to the Sun and are mostly made of rock and metal. The outer planets - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune - are farther from the Sun and are mostly made of gas.

Each planet is unique, with its own features and characteristics. For example, Venus is the hottest planet, and Jupiter is the largest.

## Beyond the Planets: The Outer Edges

Beyond the planets, our solar system continues with the asteroid belt, the Kuiper belt, and the Oort Cloud, each hosting a variety of icy bodies and space rocks.

1) What does the solar system include?

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2. What role does the Sun play in the solar system?

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3) How are the inner and outer planets different?

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4) Can you find a fact about Venus and Jupiter from the passage?

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5) What other features exist in our solar system beyond the planets?

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