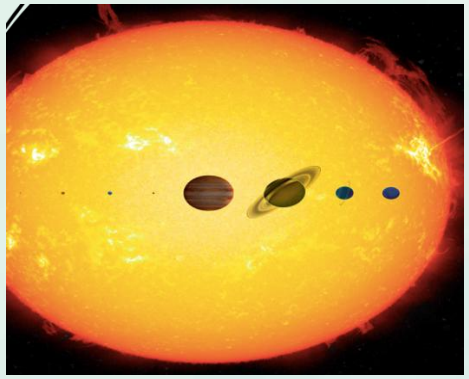
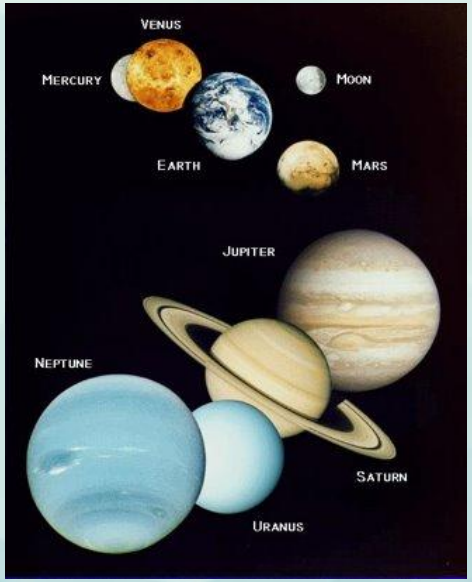






Who are the hidden, or not so hidden, figures of space?

Key facts

Earth rotates on its axis. It does a full rotation once in every 24 hours. At the same time that Earth is rotating, it is also orbiting around the Sun. It takes a little more than 365 days to orbit the Sun. Leap years take into account this extra quarter of a day in each orbit.	It appears that the Sun moves across the sky during the day but the Sun does not move. It is the movement of the Earth that makes this apparent movement of the Sun across the sky.	Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars are rocky planets, made up of mostly rock and metals. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune are mostly made up of gases (helium and hydrogen) although they do have cores made up of rock and metal.
Daytime occurs when the side of the Earth is facing towards the Sun. Night occurs when the side of the Earth is facing away from the Sun.	The Moon orbits the Earth in an oval-shaped path while spinning on its axis. At various times in the month, the Moon appears to be different shapes. This is because as the Moon rotates around the Earth, the Sun lights up different parts of it, leaving other parts in shadow.	Pluto used to be considered a planet but was reclassified as a dwarf planet.

Key skills

Children will learn to:

- Use their science experiences to explore ideas and raise different kinds of questions.
- Make predictions based on experiences and begin to justify these.
- Recognise when and how to set up comparative and fair tests and begin to explain which variables need to be controlled and why.
- Make own decisions about what observations to make, the most appropriate equipment to use, measurements to use and how long to make them for.

Key vocabulary

Axis	An imaginary line about which a body rotates (in this case, the body is Earth)	Satellite	An artificial body placed in orbit around the earth, moon or another planet to collection information or to help with communication
Solar System	The collection of eight planets and their moons in orbit around the sun, together with smaller bodies in the form of asteroids, meteoroids and comets	Orbit	The curved path of a celestial object or spacecraft round a star, planet, or moon, especially a periodic elliptical revolution.
Astronomer	An expert in or student of astronomy (the branch of science which deals with celestial objects, space and the physical universe as a whole).		