



solar system:

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Mars Rover Model Celebration – Lesson Plan

Introduction:

One of the new vocabulary phrases for this unit is **solar system**. A solar system is made of a star and the planets that go around it. A solar system also includes moons, comets, asteroids and space rocks.

Let's look at a picture that will help us understand this meaning of the term "solar system". The picture shows our solar system. The star in our solar system is the Sun. Our solar system also has 8 planets. Our solar system also includes at least 146 moons but they are too small to see in this picture. The rings around Saturn that you can see are made of rocks and ice and these also form part of our solar system. Other objects such as comets, asteroids and dwarf planets (like Pluto) are also part of our solar system. What all of these objects (astronomers call them celestial bodies) have in common is that they all go around the Sun.

Solar comes from the Latin word for sun - solaris. Anytime you see a word with solar in it you know that the word is somehow related to the sun.

(If you have students who speak Spanish, read this paragraph) If you speak Spanish, look carefully at the word "solar". Inside this word, you will find the word "SOL", which in Spanish means sun. In English, solar means related to the sun, so Spanish helps you understand this new word. Both solar in English and "sol" in Spanish come from the Latin word for sun, solaris. Many words in English and Spanish come from Latin. When words in two languages look and/or sound the same and have similar meanings, we call these words cognates. Knowing about cognates can help you figure out the meanings of many new words you encounter in English.

Example:

I will name a few things. If they are part of our solar system, I want you to give me "thumbs up" and say SOLAR SYSTEM. If they are not part of our solar system put your thumbs down and remain quiet.

- A distant star that is not the sun (thumbs down)
- The planet Neptune (thumbs up)
- Halley's Comet (thumbs up)
- Phobos and Deimos (the moons of Mars) (thumbs up)

BONUS—If your students know what a constellation is...

- The Big Dipper constellation (thumbs down)

Reflection:

Do you think you are part of the solar system? Why or why not? *Allow students to share their thoughts. Then ask them if Earth goes around the Sun? If we are on the Earth, do we go around the Sun? Since we go around the Sun, we form part of the solar system.*

Make it personal:

Imagine that you are an astronaut. Think about this...If you could go to any place in the solar system to visit, what place would you choose and why? What kinds of things would you like to explore once you got to this place. When I ask you, please share your ideas with your partner. Start your explanation with, *"If I could go anywhere in the solar system..."* I will then ask some of you to share your answers. *Responses will vary.*