Planets in order for kids: a strip to print and a trick to remember them

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Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune. NASA's order, a one-page strip to print, a memory sentence, and why Pluto isn't on it.

The eight planets in order from the Sun are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. That is NASA's list. A sentence that helps children remember it: "My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nachos", one word for each planet's first letter. Pluto is a dwarf planet, so it isn't on the list. Peabody's Planets in order page has the eight in a row, each one a link, and prints as a one-page strip for the wall, Letter or A4.

The strip

The page draws each planet as a coloured disc, numbers it from 1 to 8, and gives its distance from the Sun. The distances are NASA's averages, in millions of kilometers:

- Planet: Mercury · Number: 1 · Millions of km from the Sun: 57.9
- Planet: Venus · Number: 2 · Millions of km from the Sun: 108.2
- Planet: Earth · Number: 3 · Millions of km from the Sun: 149.6
- Planet: Mars · Number: 4 · Millions of km from the Sun: 228.0
- Planet: Jupiter · Number: 5 · Millions of km from the Sun: 778.5
- Planet: Saturn · Number: 6 · Millions of km from the Sun: 1,432
- Planet: Uranus · Number: 7 · Millions of km from the Sun: 2,867
- Planet: Neptune · Number: 8 · Millions of km from the Sun: 4,515

Look at the gaps. The first four are bunched close to the Sun. Then there is a jump of more than 500 million km to Jupiter, and each gap after that is bigger than the last. A printed strip can't show that, because the planets would run off the page, so it's worth saying out loud.

The memory trick

"My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nachos." Each word's first letter is a planet's first letter, in order.

Children often remember a sentence they made up better than one they were given. Try making your own as a family: it needs eight words starting M, V, E, M, J, S, U, N. Silly is fine. "My Very Excited Mouse Jumped Straight Up Now" works just as well. Write the winner on the printed strip.

Two ways to group them

Splitting eight into two fours makes it easier.

- The rocky four: Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. Small, close to the Sun, with solid ground.
- The giant four: Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Huge, far out, mostly gas and ice, with no ground to stand on.

By NASA's numbers, Jupiter is 11 Earths wide and Mercury is only 38 out of every 100 parts of Earth's width. A child who knows "small four, then big four" has the order half learned.

Why Pluto isn't on it

Pluto was counted as the ninth planet until 2006, when the International Astronomical Union made a new group, dwarf planets. Pluto is smaller than Earth's Moon and shares its part of space with many icy bodies. It is still a world worth knowing, and it has its own Pluto page on Peabody with the same NASA numbers as the planets.

Things to do with the strip

1. Read it aloud, then cover one. Fold one planet under and ask which is missing.
2. Walk it. Put eight pieces of paper down a hallway, closer together at the Sun end and further apart at the far end.
3. Tap each name. Every planet on the page links to its own world page, with what it is at three reading levels.
4. Play the quiz. The planets in order quiz asks ten questions with three boxes each, and reads every question aloud.

Three questions grown-ups ask

Which planet is closest to Earth? It changes from month to month, because every planet is moving around the Sun at its own speed.

Is the Sun a planet? No, it's a star, the one all eight planets go around. The Sun page explains it, starting with the most important rule: never look at the Sun.

Can we see the planets from home? Five of them, with bare eyes: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Sky Tonight says which are up on a given night, from a ZIP that never leaves your phone.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up. The library has stories at your child's reading level, including space ones.

Sources

- NASA, planetary fact sheets: the order, the distances and the sizes, checked 29 October 2026.
- The 2006 dwarf-planet decision is the International Astronomical Union's, as Peabody's Planets in order page tells it.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/planets-in-order-for-kids