

# PLANET EARTH

To you, the Earth is home, sweet home – the centre of your universe. But to a slimy alien, it's an itty bitty blob of blue hanging about in the vast, inky blackness of space. Bet that's put you in your space, sorry, place. In fact, the Earth is one of eight planets (balls of rock or gas) that travel non-stop around the Sun. Technically speaking, our own particular bit of space is called the solar system. It's made up of the Sun, the planets, moons and other bits of space stuff.

FANCY A HOLIDAY THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD? WHY NOT TRY A BREAK ON ANOTHER PLANET? CONFUSED ABOUT WHICH HORRIBLE PLANET TO PICK? I PICKED UP THIS SERIOUSLY STRANGE SPACE GUIDE ON MY TRAVELS. IT'S COSMIC!

## Horrible Holiday Guide: THE PLANETS

**Mercury:** For serious sun-worshippers, Mercury might be the planet for you. It's so horribly close to the Sun that daytime temperatures can reach a scorching 427°C!

**Venus:** Only recommended for the hardest visitors. Venus's atmosphere is deadly poisonous and so horribly heavy it would squash you flat in seconds.

**Earth:** The perfect planet for you if you happen to be a human. Actually, it's the ONLY planet with the air and water you need to stay alive!

**Mars:** Nicknamed the 'Red Planet', it's famous for its pretty pink scenery. Trouble is, after you've seen a few hundred dusty, red rocks, you've seen them all.

**Jupiter:** There's loads to see on Jupiter – it's over 1,300 times the size of the Earth. Unfortunately, there's no solid surface to stand on – only a great big ball of gas.

**Saturn:** Saturn is another old gas bag, but it's well worth a visit for a view of its shimmering rings. Each one's made up of millions of bits of sparkly ice and rock.

**Uranus:** You'll easily spot this peculiar planet because of its ghastly, greenish tinge. This comes from mouldy methane gas in its awful atmosphere.

**Neptune:** One of the newest planets in our brochure, Neptune wasn't discovered until 1846. But with winds roaring at 2,000 km/h, the weather's likely to be woeful.

OUT OF THIS WORLD!

## All systems go

So where did the solar system come from? How on Earth did the Earth get here? It all happened so long ago that no one knows for sure. Even Wanda's seriously brainy Uncle Cliff isn't that old. Here's what spaced-out scientists think might have happened:

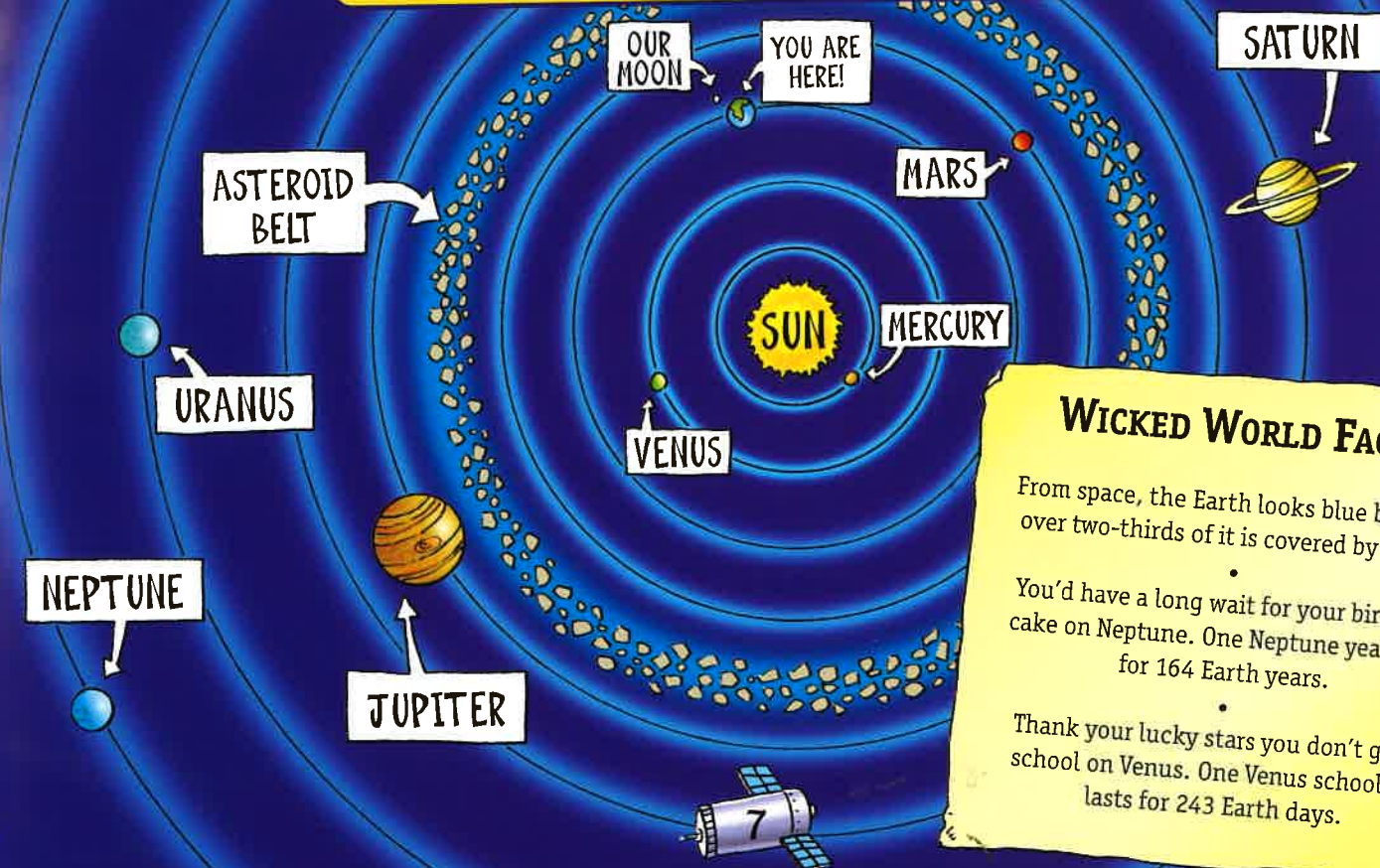
1 About 4,600 million years ago, a colossal cloud of gas and dust starts spinning round.

2 Gravity (that's a force that pulls on things in space) causes the cloud to collapse.

3 The Sun forms from glowing gas in the centre of the collapsing cloud and begins to shine.

4 Specks of rock and ice in the cloud bump and clump together to make planets, including the Earth.

## The sensational solar system



## WICKED WORLD FACTS

From space, the Earth looks blue because over two-thirds of it is covered by water.

You'd have a long wait for your birthday cake on Neptune. One Neptune year lasts for 164 Earth years.

Thank your lucky stars you don't go to school on Venus. One Venus schoolday lasts for 243 Earth days.