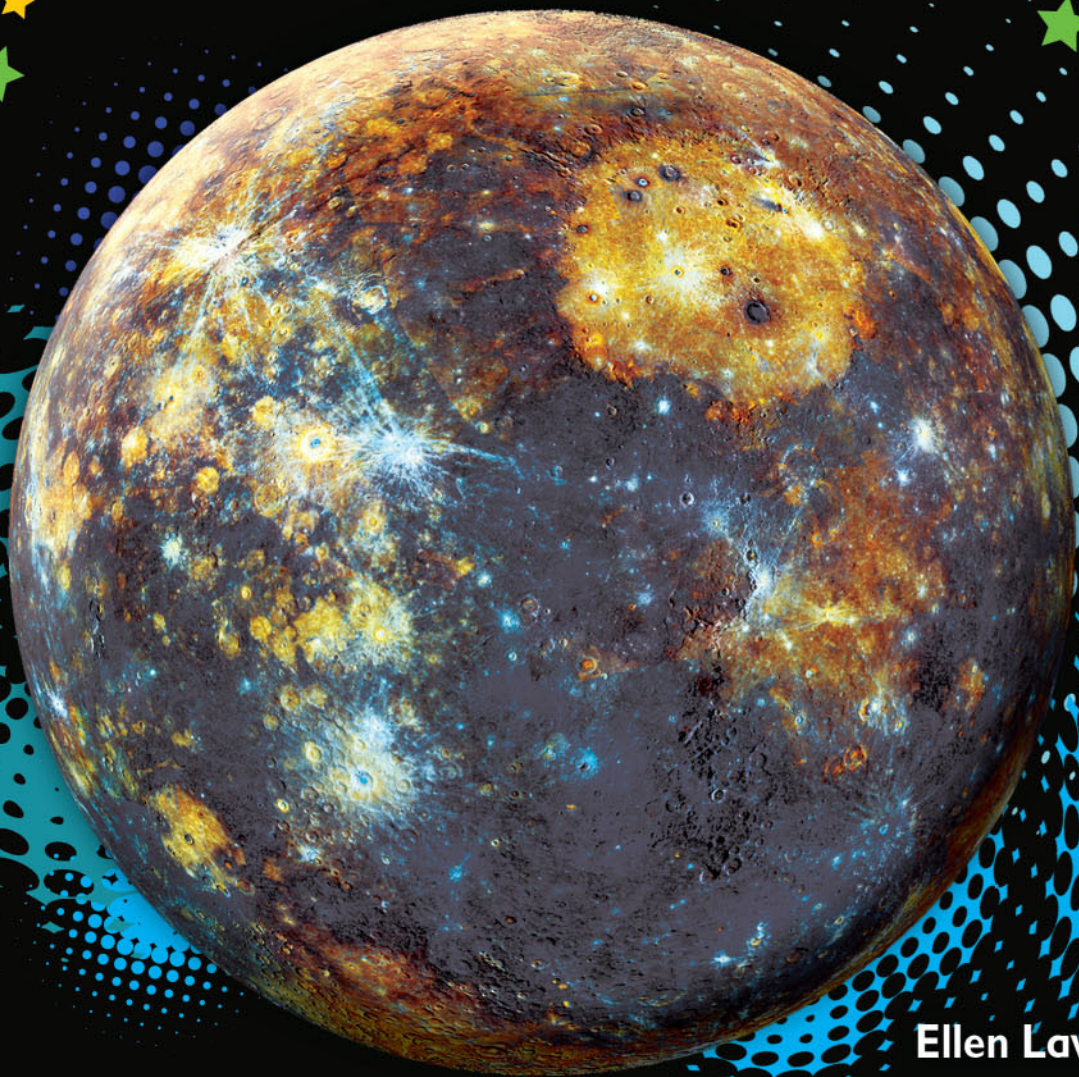




MERCURY

The High-Speed Planet



Ellen Lawrence

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MERCURY

The High-Speed Planet

by Ellen Lawrence

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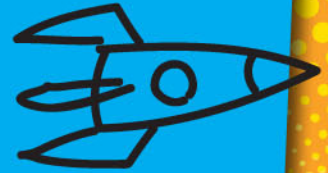
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Words shown in **bold** in the text are explained in the glossary.



Welcome to Mercury



Imagine a world that is millions of miles from Earth.

In every direction, the land is rocky and covered with large holes called **craters**.

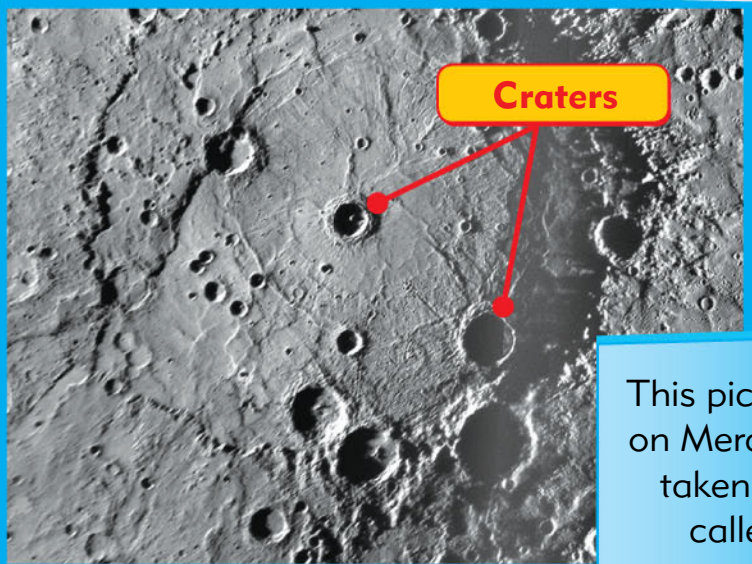
The Sun looks three times larger than it does from Earth.

During the day, it is so hot that some metals would melt.

At night, it is much colder than the coldest place on Earth.

Welcome to the **planet** Mercury!

A human could not visit Mercury because it is too hot in the daytime. Spacecraft have explored the planet, however, from just above its surface.



This picture of the craters on Mercury's surface was taken by a spacecraft called *Messenger*.

The Solar System



Mercury is moving through space at about 106,000 miles per hour (170,500 km/h).

It is moving around the Sun in an oval, or egg-shaped, path.

Mercury is one of eight planets circling the Sun.

The planets are called Mercury, Venus, our home planet Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

Icy **comets** and rocky **asteroids** are also moving around the Sun.

Together, the Sun, the planets, and other space objects are called the **solar system**.

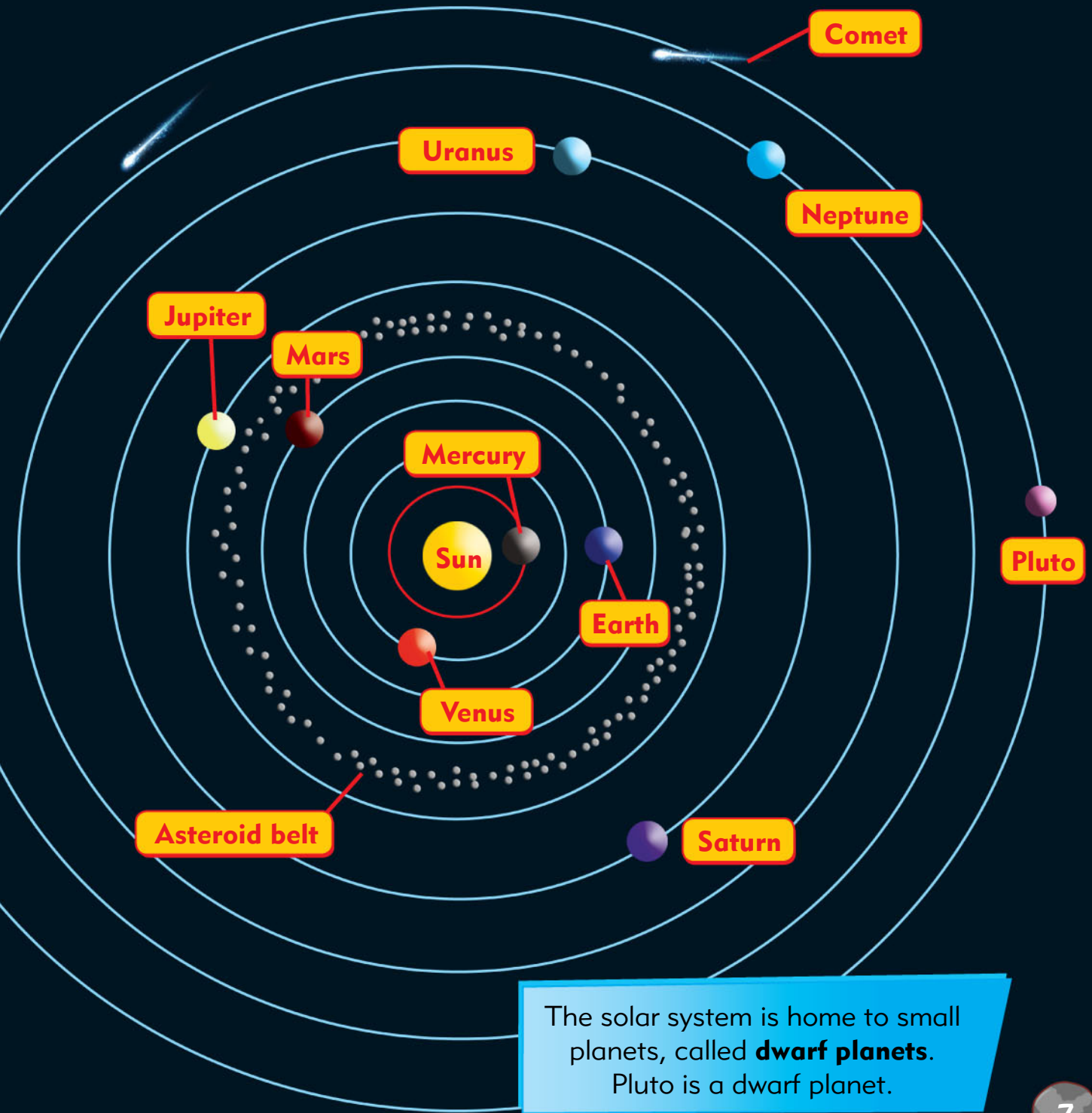
Asteroids are huge space rocks. Most of the asteroids circling the Sun are in a ring called the asteroid belt.



An asteroid

The Solar System

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun.



The solar system is home to small planets, called **dwarf planets**. Pluto is a dwarf planet.

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Learn More Online

To learn more about Mercury, go to
www.rubytuesdaybooks.com/mercury

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MERCURY

The High-Speed Planet

Millions of miles from Earth, a small, rocky world circles the Sun. The sky is always black, and the land is covered with huge craters. This planet is scorching by day and freezing by night.



Welcome to Mercury!



Titles in this series

COMETS, METEORS, AND ASTEROIDS

Voyagers of the Solar System

EARTH

Our Home in the Solar System

JUPITER

The Giant of the Solar System

MARS

The Dusty Planet

MERCURY

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THE MOON

Our Neighbor in Space

NEPTUNE

The Stormiest Planet

PLUTO

and the Dwarf Planets

SATURN

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THE SUN

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