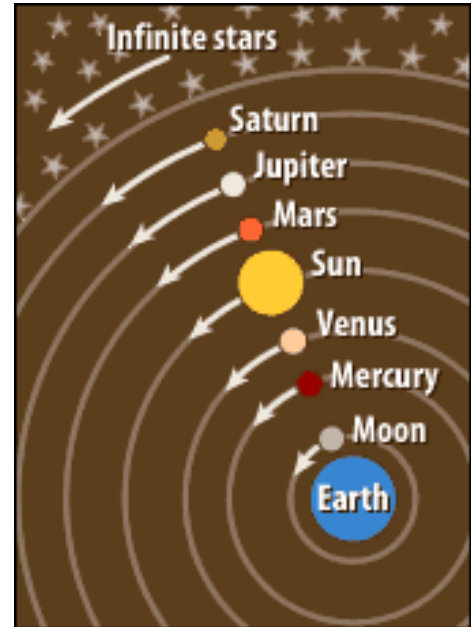


# The “Planets” and the Days of the Week

The names of the days of the week originate from a mix of Roman gods, their Anglo-Saxon adaptations, and astronomical objects.

The names date back over 2,000 years ago when the geocentric (earth-centered) theory of the universe dominated early astronomy teachings. There were only 7 objects in the sky that routinely wandered – that is changed their apparent positions as they “moved around Earth”. Those seven objects were called “planets”. The Greek word “planet” literally means “wanderer”.

There were 7 “planets” recognized at that time: Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. Those 7 wanderers, crossing the Earth’s sky, became our days of the week that we still use today.



Day	“Planet”	Other Language Origin
Sunday	Sun	
Monday	Moon	
Tuesday	Mars	Mardi from the French
Wednesday	Mercury	Mercredi from the French
Thursday	Jupiter	Thor from the Norse
Friday	Venus	Vendredi from the French
Saturday	Saturn	

With the emergence and acceptance of the heliocentric (sun-centered) theory, more than 1,500 years later, the [definition of a planet](#) in our solar system has changed and evolved to include Earth, Uranus (1781), and Neptune (1846), while the Sun and the Moon have left the group of “wanderers”.

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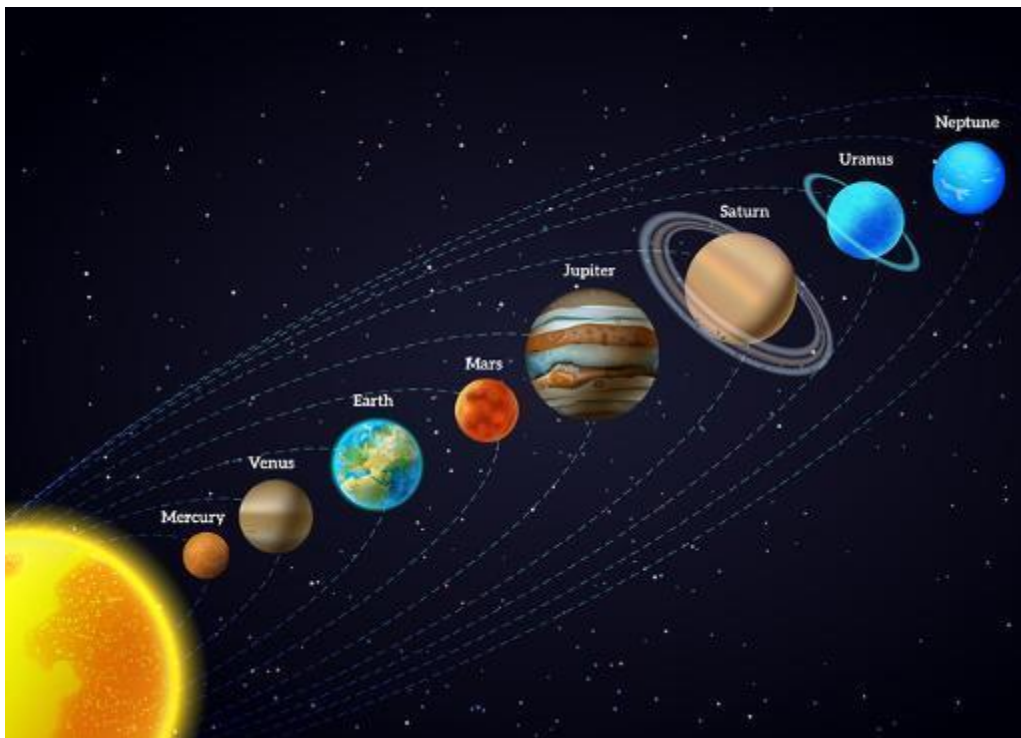
## Current Definition of a Planet

The most recent definition of a planet was adopted by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in 2006. It says a planet must do three things:

1. It must orbit a star (in our cosmic neighborhood, the Sun).
2. It must be large enough to have enough gravity to force it into a spherical shape.
3. It must be large enough that its gravity cleared away any other objects of a similar size near its orbit around the star.

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Using the above definition, **there are 8 planets in our solar system:** Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune (in order from the Sun).



**Not to scale in size or distance**