



Neptune

- Neptune was named after the Roman god of the sea. Its Greek name is Poseidon.
 - The planet orbits 4,500,000,000 km (4.5 billion km) from the sun (30AU) and takes almost 165 Earth years to complete one orbit. This means a season on Neptune lasts for about 41 Earth years.
 - Its diameter of 49,500 km makes it the fourth largest planet.
 - It takes about 16 hours for Neptune to rotate once around its axis.
- Discovered in 1846, the hunt for Neptune was a great detective story. After the planet Uranus was discovered in 1781, many years of careful observations led to the conclusion that it was never quite where it was supposed to be. The gravity from an unknown planet was changing its orbit slightly. By measuring the changes in the orbit of Uranus, astronomers were able to deduce the location of the new planet.
 - Neptune was actually seen in 1613 by Galileo, but he failed to recognize it as a planet.
 - Neptune has been visited by only one spacecraft (Voyager 2 in 1989) which saw an enormous storm the size of the Earth. This showed up as a dark spot in the atmosphere, but has since dissipated.
 - Like all the other gas giants, Neptune has rings. They are, however, narrow and faint.
 - Neptune has 13 known moons.