

7.3: Comparing Planets

We will look at our Solar System and its worlds from a comparison perspective, called **Comparative Planetology**, rather than focus on a lot of numbers and data. To compare the planets, they will be grouped into two major types: the **Rocky** or **Terrestrial (Earth-Like) planets**, and the **Gas Giants** or **Jovian (Jupiter-like) planets**. Recall, the focus of this module will be on the Rocky Planets. The next module will focus on the Gas Giants.

The table, **Rocky Planets Vs. Gas Giant Planets**, provides a broad snapshot of the differences between the Rocky Planets and the Gas Giant Planets.

Rocky Planets Vs. Gas Giant Planets

Rocky Planets: Mercury-Venus-Earth-Mars

Characteristics:

- Distance from the Sun — Close
- Revolution Length — Short
- Surface Type — Solid surface
- Diameter — Small
- Craters — Many
- Water — All except Venus
- Rings — None
- Satellites — Few or none

Gas Giant Planets: Jupiter-Saturn-Uranus-Neptune

Characteristics:

- Distance from the Sun — Farther out
- Revolution Length — Long
- Surface Type — Gas; Probably no surface or very small icy core
- Diameter — Large
- Craters — None (gas)
- Water — Yes; in the atmosphere (gas)
- Rings — Yes; from one to multiple rings
- Satellites — Many

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