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13 Planets: The Latest View Of The Solar System (National Geographic Kids)



Synopsis

First, Pluto left. Then it came back, along with Ceres and Eris...and now Haumea and MakeMake, too! The recent actions of the International Astronomical Union have put every solar system book out of date. In response, National Geographic joins forces with David Aguilar of the Harvard Smithsonian Astronomical Observatory to revise our 2008 book and to update young readers on the high-interest topic of space. Using simple text and spectacular photorealistic computer art by the author, this book profiles all 13 planets in their newly created categories plus the sun, the Oort Cloud, comets, and other worlds being discovered. Back-of-the-book activities offer hands-on fun for budding astronomers.

Book Information

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Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

David A. Aguilar is the author and illustrator of several books from National Geographic. His 13 Planets: The Latest View of the Solar System received the Eureka! Nonfiction Children's Book Gold Award from the California Reading Association. His writings are widely recognized for their ability to communicate the wonderment of science to enthusiasts of all ages. He is the originator of the Science Discovery program at the University of Colorado, Boulder; the popular host of the

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics Observatory Nights program; and the past director of the Fiske Planetarium.

Once upon a time, long ago and far away, there were precisely seven planets: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, all apparently revolving around a solidly fixed Earth. And then about five centuries ago came Nicholas Copernicus, who invented the solar system. He said the Sun was really in the middle surrounded by six planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth (with Moon), Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. It was truly the Sun's system, with Earth now a spinning planet. It was all very simple and elegant. Three centuries after Copernicus, things were no longer so simple. In 1781 another big planet, Uranus, was found, and then a lot of small ones were given names like Ceres, Astraea, Flora, Hygeia, and Kalliope. In 1846, still another big planet, Neptune, gained planetary status. By 1854 there were 41 planets, and astronomers cried "Enough!" So they all decided there were eight large planets, and the little guys weren't really planets but minor planets. Today astronomers know that the solar system is much more complex and interesting than anyone dreamed of in the 1850s. There are more than 130 natural satellites, and more are being discovered. One, Saturn's Titan, is bigger than the planet Mercury. If Titan and our moon had independent orbits, they would qualify as planets. Astronomers now have orbits for nearly 500,000 minor planets, half of which have been assigned numbers, and about 15,000 of which have been given names. Almost all of them are irregularly-shaped rocks, but at least one, Ceres, is massive enough for its gravity to pull it into a sphere, so it is a dwarf planet. And there are the comets, hoards of them in the deep freeze beyond Neptune. Occasionally some of these huge chunks of dirty ice get nudged into the inner parts of the solar system, where they thaw out and sprout long, beautiful tails. And a few of these ice balls are massive enough to pull themselves into spherical dwarf planets. Pluto is one of these, smaller than our moon. Makemake and Haumea are still smaller, while Eris is a little larger than Pluto. Three of these even have their own satellites. Undoubtedly more of these icy dwarf planets await discovery. For now, there are eight classical planets and five dwarf planets, making thirteen! --Dr. Owen Gingerich, Former Research Professor of Astronomy, Harvard and Astronomer Emeritus, Smithsonian Astronomical Observatory

It gives the best summary I've seen on the latest thinking re: definition and identification of planets. Who knew there were 13 now? Pluto is back in but as a dwarf planet and it has some new dwarf planet friends. My 5 1/2 grandson knew most of the rest of the planetary/solar system information as apparently it is pretty basic but beautifully illustrated. Also includes mythology and historical asides

which he did not know, but which actually bring an interesting interdisciplinary element into the study. If your child is really serious about planets and stars, and older than about 7 this may be too basic, but would probably be fine for all others. Is a typically beautifully illustrated National Geographic product and fortunately we enjoy reading it.

Wow! Did I learn a lot! This is the latest information known about the solar system to date. I taught the solar system to elementary students for 36 years and I was amazed at how things have changed. I only retired 6 years ago but it is a though I knew very little. How much fun it would be to teach about Haumer in the Kuiper Belt! Imagine an icy football tumbling end-over-end with a rock inside! And contemplate the "Easterbunny" or Makemake (MAH-keh MAH-keh), the 12th planet from the sun! We can't even imagine how cold it is at -406 degrees F. There is not anything on Earth that we know of that is that cold! See what I mean? It's a new universe out there!

This is a good solar system book because it really has the most updated information of any kids book I looked at for this age range. That being said..I don't love the book but it's good enough. I saw another I liked more but it didn't have as much on the dwarf planets. I don't like the way this book is written that much...when closely compared to Our Solar System by Seymour Simon, I think the wording and flow are much better in that book but I went with this one because it seemed to have more diagrams and seemed like it might be more appealing for a 6 year old to peruse on their own. In the end I guess I'd say both would be useful books and I'm sure I'll eventually pick up the Seymour Simon as well. So, I like this book but perhaps as more of a companion with other solar system books.

If your kid is a solar system nut, like ours, this is a great book. He doesn't like that most planet books don't have the dwarf planets, so I was excited for this one. When I told him this book was coming he said "does it show the dwarf planet candidates?" He was so happy they are mentioned too.

This is such a fun book! My son and I loved the journey all the way from the sun to the 13th dwarf plant, Eris. Some of our favorite facts learned included: Why is Mercury silent? Could life be possible on one of Saturn's moons? Why is Venus considered earth's "evil twin"? How did earth's moon form? Which two planets do scientists think might have diamonds under their clouds?I enjoyed having all the Planetary updates from my elementary school days when Pluto "lost" its

planet status and all we had was "My Very Energetic Mother Jumped Straight Up Near"...My son and I finished this book wanting to learn even more about our solar system and wondering about its mysteries.

My 6 year old daughter is super into outer space so I ordered this book hoping it wouldn't be too over her head. It's not but would also be perfect for an older child. She is more into minor/dwarf planets so this book is perfect. The illustrations are gorgeous and plentiful. LOTS of information. In fact we loved it so much we will have order it again as her first copy was covered in old banana after she toted it into kindergarten class to show it off.

This is a good book for children that are interested in outer space. I, however had to return it because it is intended for kids about eight years old, and my kids are 11.

Absolutely Gorgeous and a very important resource for your classroom.

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