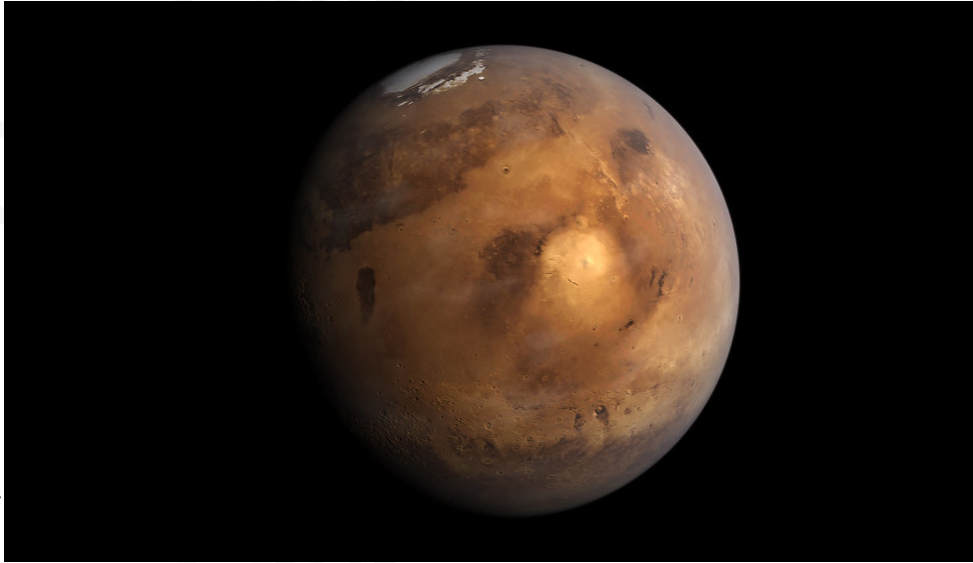


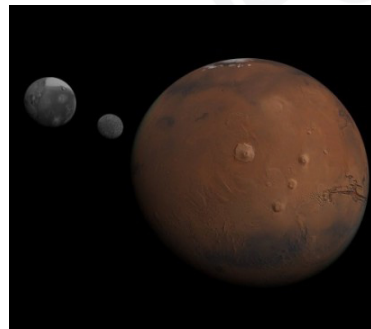
Mars



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Introduction

There are eight planets in our solar system. Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun, orbiting at an average of 142 million miles. Mars is named after the Roman god of war and is often referred to as the Red Planet. This is because of the iron oxide that covers its surface. It is the second smallest planet in our solar system and is one of the four terrestrial planets. Mars has two moons, Phobos and Deimos.



K.D. Moss, Jonathan Swift and the moons of Mars, Kronos, vol VIII

Planetary Data

Mars has a diameter of 4,224 miles, which is around half that of Earth.

Its closest distance to the Sun is 128 million miles and its furthest distance 154 million miles.

The temperature ranges between -143°C and 33°C . The average is -63°C .

Physical Data

Mars is a terrestrial planet whose surface is covered in craters, valleys and mountains.

There is a large amount of dust which can be whipped up by the 90mph winds into huge dust storms.

The two polar ice caps are mainly water.

Orbit and Rotation

Mars has days and seasons which are similar to Earth's because the planet rotates once every 24 hours and 37 minutes and has a rotational axis tilt of 25° .

Mars orbits the Sun every 687 days.

Flora and Fauna

The surface water on Mars disappeared millions of years ago, together with any life forms it may have supported. It will be for future generations to discover if there is life below ground.