



## Lesson 4 - Memorizing the Planets in Order and Size (*required*)

### Background

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A mnemonic device is a tool for assisting the memory by using rhymes, rules, phrases, letters, or names to help remember a list of names, dates, facts, or figures.

By using and practicing a mnemonic device, the students will easily be able to remember the names of the planets in order from the Sun and also easily be able to remember the planets in order according to size.

### Teacher Notes and Hints

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- If you want the students to gather the information on each planet or construct the planetary cards now (Lesson 12), you can use a variety of references or resources to allow them to find both the order and the sizes of the planets.
- You could adapt this to grade level - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders could use print-outs of the information; you may want 5<sup>th</sup> graders to look for their own information to practice their “research” skills.
- After this activity, you may want to suggest that the students use mnemonic devices for remembering work from other classes. Show them how this would work for memorizing the names of states or countries in geography or names of presidents in history.
- You may want the students to create posters of their mnemonic devices. They can display their mnemonic words along with a representation of the planet.
- In order to assess the activity, you can check the students’ mnemonic devices for accuracy and completeness. You can also ask them to write their mnemonic devices along with the appropriate planets’ names the following day as part of their activity grade. This allows you to assess the level of mastery for both the mnemonic concept and planet knowledge.

### Skills and Objectives

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Students will be able to:

- Learn the names of the planets in order from the Sun.
- Name the planets in order according to size.
- Devise a mnemonic device to help memorize the planets’ names for both size and order.

- Describe how a mnemonic device could help them remember a list of names or places for other classes.

## Activity Overview

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In this activity, the students learn what a mnemonic device is and how it could help them to remember a list of names or facts that would otherwise be difficult to remember.

Explain the concept of a mnemonic device to the students and review the Solar System mnemonic device “My Very Educated Mother...,” emphasizing that the beginning letter stands for the beginning letter of a planet’s name.

It is helpful to write the device on the board and then allow the students to practice coming up with the appropriate planet’s name. This allows them to get more familiar with the names each time they practice it and also reinforces correct spelling and memorization of the mnemonic device.

Stress that the mnemonic device does not work if they remember only the device letters or words, but what the letters mean: In “My,” the M stands for Mercury.

## Vocabulary

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**mnemonic devise** - a tool to assist in remembering a list of names, facts, or figures by using letters, rhymes, words, or names.

**Names of planets:** Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto

## Materials

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- Student worksheets

## Extensions

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The students can create a poster explaining their mnemonic devices to be displayed in the classroom or hallway.

The students can be encouraged to use a variety of mnemonic devices.

The students can practice using a mnemonic device to memorize the planets that are rocky and the planets that are gaseous.

The students can practice using a mnemonic device to memorize the names of Uranus or Saturn moons.