

## Mars

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Mars is the fourth closest planet to the Sun. Mars is a rocky planet. It has two oddly shaped moons. They are named Phobos and Deimos. They are named after two Roman gods. The Roman god of war is named Mars. Mars is also known as the “red planet.” This is because it is covered with iron oxide. Iron oxide is another name for rust. Rust has a reddish tint. Mars has the largest mountain in the Solar System. The largest mountain on Mars is Olympus Mons. Olympus Mons is very high and very wide. It takes 687 days on Mars to orbit the Sun. A year on Mars is almost double an Earth year. A day on Mars is about the same amount of time as on Earth. It takes Mars 24 hours and 23 minutes to rotate once around its axis. This defines its day. The average temperature on Mars is -80 degrees Fahrenheit. Recent information gathered from Mars has indicated running water on the surface in some places. Scientists are still collecting information about this discovery. Two rovers Spirit and Opportunity landed on Mars in 2004. They spent over five years exploring the surface of the planet. They analyzed the rocks, soil, and geography of the planet.