

UNIT 2: THE EARTH AND THE UNIVERSE

DESCRIBING PLANETS AND TALKING ABOUT CALENDARS

Dear language assistant,

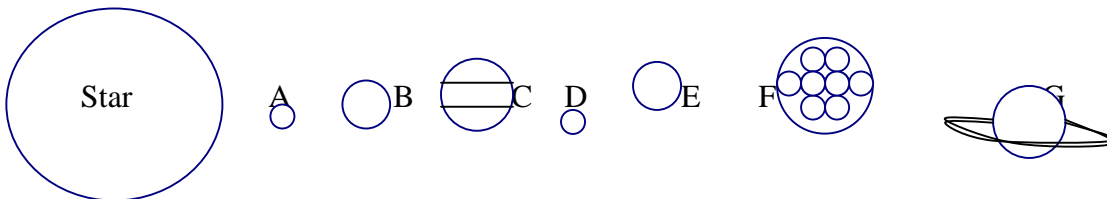
1. We can review how to describe planets (size, distance, appearance) using comparatives, superlatives, different from, similar to... Here is an example you can copy on the board; you can also use it for a dictation:

Jupiter is the fifth planet in the Solar System. It is between Mars and Saturn. It is nearer to the Sun than Saturn and farther than Mars.

Jupiter is a big planet. It's the biggest planet in the Solar System but it is smaller than the Sun.

Jupiter has coloured bands and many moons. It is similar to Saturn and it's very different from the Earth.

3. Then you can draw some planets on the board and ask them some questions about size, distance and appearance. Which planet is the biggest? Is A smaller than B? Is C nearer to B than C?... They can also try to make a complete description for planet A, then planet B and so on. (Notice that C has coloured bands, F is plenty of craters and G has rings as Saturn. You can also use different colours to draw different planets)



4. Explain them that there are **other calendars** which are different from ours. A calendar is a system for organising time based on groups of days, weeks and months. There is not one unifying calendar used throughout the world. Different cultures have their own calendars. The Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and Chinese calendars are all different to the one we use in the Western world. Write this on the board, please:

Chinese Calendar: 4705

Muslim Calendar: 1385

Jewish Calendar: 5767.

Hindu Calendar: 2061.

- *Which is the oldest? And the youngest?*
- *What happened during the first year of our calendar?* Our calendar starts with Jesus Christ's birth (although many historians think there is a mistake and Jesus Christ really was born 3 BC ;!) (Explain the meaning of BC and AD)
- *What happened the first day of the Muslim Calendar?* (Prophet Mohamed travelled from Mecca to Medina. It happened in 622). So $1385 + 622 = 2007$

- You can also tell them the **Muslim calendar** is very different from ours because it is based on moon phases. In the Muslim calendar there are six months with 29 days and six months with 30 days. Remember that the movement of the Moon around the Earth lasts 29.5 days. So, *how many days are there in the Muslim year?* There are 354 days in a Muslim year and it's 11 days shorter than the solar year. Due to this difference, the same month, for instance the sacred month of Ramadan, may belong to winter one year and to spring a few years later.)

Thank you