

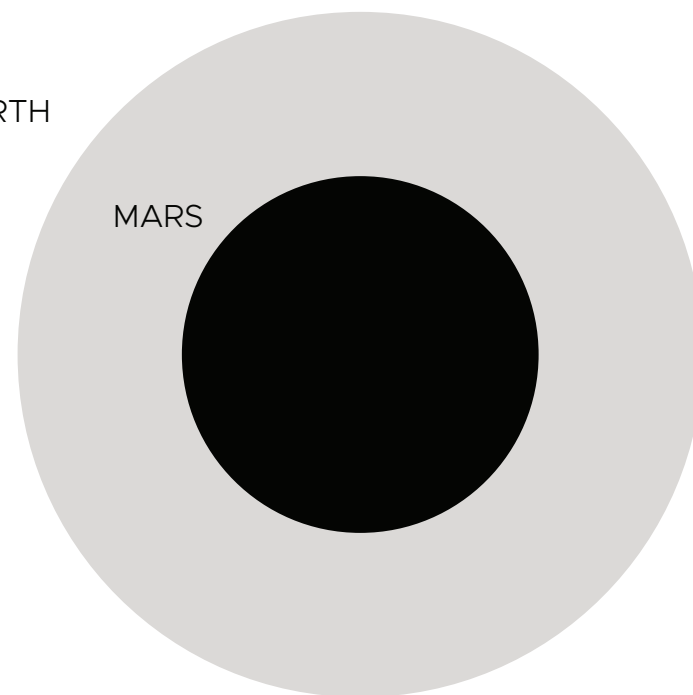
The planets are shown in their correct order of distance from the Sun and their correct relative orbital distances. The sizes of the bodies are greatly exaggerated relative to the orbital distances.

**MARS**—the fourth planet from the Sun—is a dusty, cold, desert world with a very thin atmosphere. This dynamic planet has seasons, polar ice caps, extinct volcanoes, canyons and weather. Mars is one of the most explored bodies in our solar system, and it's the only planet where we've sent rovers to roam the alien landscape. NASA missions have found lots of evidence that Mars was much wetter and warmer, with a thicker atmosphere, billions of years ago.

Mars was named by the Romans for their god of war because its reddish color was reminiscent of blood. The Egyptians called it "Her Desher," meaning "the red one." Even today, it is frequently called the "Red Planet" because iron minerals in the Martian dirt oxidize, or rust, causing the surface to look red.

EARTH

MARS



Mars is 0.53x (or 53%) the size of Earth

# NASA EXPLORES MARS

[solarsystem.nasa.gov/mars](https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/mars)