

+ Researchers

More women astronomers who have contributed to our knowledge about the Solar System:

Mary Orr Evershed (United States, 1867-1949)
“There can be no doubt that, as well as gravity and an eruptive force, there are other forces operating on the surface of the Sun,” Evershed wrote. She observed the effect of electrical forces on ionised gases and magnetic forces in the areas around sunspots.

Annie Scott Dill Russell Maunder (Ireland, 1868-1947)
Editor of the *Journal of British Astronomical Association* from 1894 to 1896. Annie Maunder specialised in the Sun and argued that the Earth influences the number and area of sunspots. She also proposed that, when seen from the earth, sunspots are less frequent from the east to west rim. She discovered that changes in the Sun cause fluctuations in the earth’s climate.

Hanna Steele Petit (United States, 1889-1962)
Worked at the Mount Wilson Observatory after receiving her Doctorate. Led expeditions to study solar eclipses in Colorado in 1918, Honey Lake in 1923 and Point Lorna, California, in 1940. The last expedition in which she took part was in Lancaster, New Hampshire, in 1932.



Charlotte Moore Sittley (United States, 1898-1990)
AsDedicated almost her entire career as an astronomer to studying atomic lines in the spectra of sunspots. Published the definitive work on the solar spectrum in which she compiled, organised and analysed all of the available laboratory data.



The Sun and the bodies orbiting around it make up the Solar System.

A mediocre star...
but it is our own

The Sun is Earth’s nearest star. It is 149,597,871 kilometres away. This distance is called an Astronomical Unit or AU and it is equivalent to eight light- minutes. This means that the light we see was emitted by the Sun eight minutes ago.

Some facts about our star:

5.800 K is its surface temperature.		Its mass mass is two quintillion kilos 2.000.000... (with a further 24 zeros)	Its diameter is 1.392.000 km
It was formed some 5.000 million years ago.	In around another 5.000 million years years it will become a red giant.	It is 330,000 times heavier than the earth	109 times the diameter of our own planet

MILESTONES
IN SOLAR SYSTEM
ASTRONOMY

Circa 7000 BC
Paintings at **Chanchal de Mahoma** (Spain) representing the phases of the Moon.

4800 BC
Calendar stone engraving found on the border between Egypt and Sudan

2300 BC
The first recorded observation of a **comet** takes place in China.

Circa 1450 BC
The Egyptians begin using **solar days**.

1302 BC
An **eclipse of the Sun** and a **supernova** are observed, in China.

1100 BC
Lists of stars along the ecliptic are produced in Egypt for **telling the time** at night.

800 BC
First observations of **sunspots**, in China.

Second Century AD
The **Ptolemaic system** provides an explanation for the movement of the Sun, the Moon and the known planets and locates the Earth in the centre.

1610
Galileo discovers four satellites of Jupiter.

1611
Sunspots are observed through a telescope for the first time.

1758
Nicole Reine-Lepaute defines parameters for observing Halley’s comet the following year

1781
The planet **Uranus** is discovered.

1846
Discovery of **Neptune**.

1801
Discovery of **Ceres**.

1969
First human on the Moon.

1930
Discovery of **Pluto**.

1977
Rings of Uranus discovered.

2005
An object larger than Pluto, the dwarf planet **Eris**, is discovered in the Kuiper belt.

2006
Pluto is included in the new category of dwarf planets.

2008
The second NASA Phoenix mission finds **ice at Mars’s North Pole**.

