

Unit
12

What is the Sun?

In this unit we explore two different ways of describing the Sun – using **prose** and **poetry**.

The Sun is a star. It is the nearest star to Earth, which is why it seems much bigger than any other star, but really the Sun is quite a small star. Some stars, that are much further away, are thousands of times bigger than the Sun.

The Sun is a huge ball of fiery gas. It is 150 million kilometres from Earth, and without it there would be no light or warmth on Earth. If the Sun did not give us light and heat there would be no life on Earth, so the Sun is very important to us. We are not its only planet, though; it has eight others.

It takes Earth about 365 days, or one year, to travel once round the Sun.

The sun is an orange dinghy sailing across a calm sea.
It is a gold coin dropped down a drain in heaven.
It is a yellow beach ball kicked high into the summer sky.
It is a red thumb-print on a sheet of pale blue paper.
It is the gold top from a milk bottle floating on a puddle.

Wes Magee



Do you remember?

Copy these sentences.

Choose the correct ending to finish each.

- Most stars are _____ (smaller than the Sun, the same size as the Sun, bigger than the Sun.)
- The Sun is made of _____ (glowing rocks, red water, fiery gases.)

- The distance from Earth to the Sun is _____. (15 million kilometres, 150 million kilometres, 1500 million kilometres.)
- Once every year, _____ (the Sun travels around the Earth, the Moon travels around the Earth, the Earth travels around the Sun)

More to think about

- Use the grid to answer the questions with grid references. The first one has been done to help you.

	A	B	C
1	150	light	8
2	heat	365	the Sun
3	1	gas	thousands

 - How many planets, apart from Earth, does the Sun have?
 - How many times bigger than the Sun are some other stars?
 - What two important things does the Sun give to Earth?
 - How many days does the Earth take to circle the Sun?
 - How many years does the Earth take to circle the Sun?
 - Which is the nearest star to Earth?
 - What is the Sun made of?
- The poet compares the Sun with other things.
 - What is “the calm sea” in the first verse?
 - Where does the poet think heaven is in the second verse?
 - What is the “sheet of pale blue paper” in the fourth verse?
 - Which verse do you like best? Why?

Now try these

- Using a dictionary to help you, write a definition of ‘prose’ and a definition of ‘poetry’.
- Which type of writing do you prefer for describing the Sun, or do you find them both helpful? Give your reasons.
- Poets often compare things. Write down three things that remind you of:
 - the sea.
 - a snake.
 - an ants’ nest.

