

FACTSHEET

THE SUN

- The Sun is the one star we can see in great detail.
- The Sun is not solid but made up of gases – hydrogen, helium and small amounts of 90 other elements.
- Number facts:
 - The Sun is 149.6 million kilometres away from Earth. This is close in space terms!
 - The diameter (width) of the Sun is approximately 1.4 million kilometres (about 109 times that of the Earth).
 - The surface we can see is 5,500°C.
 - The core is 15 million°C.
- The Sun looks like it is burning but it is actually exploding.
- The Sun fires out invisible particles into space. When these pass the North and South Poles they can make the air glow.
- The Sun is a relatively cool star. Its temperature is about 6000°C.
- We just see the outside surface of the Sun, inside the sun there are unimaginably violent explosions going on. Some children will be ready to use the correct terminology for the process:
 - Inside our Sun atoms of hydrogen gas fuse (or join together) to form another gas called helium. This is known as nuclear fusion and is where the Sun's energy comes from.
 - This energy travels outwards to the surface of the Sun, throwing hot gases millions of miles into space before the Sun's gravity pulls it back.
 - Heat, light and radiation stream off the Sun into space.



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