

PLANET **Saturn**



Gas Giant

Saturn is the second largest planet in the solar system after Jupiter. It is 766 times the size of Earth. This means that, on a clear night, you can see it with the naked eye – incredible when you learn the planet is 1.2 billion kilometres away!

The planet is a gas giant because it is mostly hydrogen, although it may have a small rocky core. Beneath the “surface” the hydrogen is liquid and it is extremely hot. The atmosphere of Saturn is also mostly hydrogen and winds sometimes reach 1,700 kph. Saturn is a very active planet and it produces 2.5 times the heat it receives from the sun. This heat is probably the reason why the planet looks yellow-brown to us.

The Lord of Rings

A well-known feature of Saturn is its rings. These rings – just bits of ice – are less than 99 metres thick but spread many thousands of kilometres into space.

2

Matura Which of the following are true about Saturn? Decide in pairs. Read and mark the statements T (true) or F (false).

1 Saturn is the largest planet in our solar system.

T **F**

2 It is 1.2 billion kilometres away from Earth.

T **F**

3 It consists mostly of hydrogen.

T **F**

4 It doesn't have an atmosphere.

T **F**

5 Its winds are very strong.

T **F**

6 Its rings are very thin.

T **F**

3 a) Read the text again and match the sentences (1-5) in column A with the sentences (a-e) in column B.

	A	B
1	If there are no clouds in the sky after dark,	a ... you see hot hydrogen.
2	If you take away the rock,	b ... it takes many years to get there.
3	If you look deep inside the planet,	c ... only Jupiter is bigger.
4	If a spacecraft travels to Saturn,	d ... the main body of Saturn is just hydrogen.
5	If we compare Saturn to other planets,	e ... you don't need a telescope to see Saturn.

3 b) Say three facts about Saturn.  

Write each answer in a sentence.

- 1. For what is Saturn best known?**

- 2. What is one idea scientists have about how Saturn's rings were made?**

- 3. How does Saturn compare in size with the other planets?**

- 4. Why is Saturn colder than Earth?**

- 5. How many moons does Saturn have?**