

Planets - Classifying

We can **differentiate** the planets several ways:

By **composition** the planets are divided into:

- **Terrestrial** - Rocky planets including Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars. Composed mainly of rock and metal. Have high densities, slow rotation and solid surfaces
- **Jovian** - Gas planets composed mainly of hydrogen and helium. Tend to have low densities, rapid rotation and deep atmospheres.
- **Pluto** belongs to neither group. It is mainly composed of ice.

By **position relative to the Sun**:

- **Inner** - Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars
- **Outer** - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto

The asteroid belt forms the boundary between the inner and outer solar system.

By **position relative to the Earth**:

- **Inferior** - Mercury and Venus (closer to Sun than Earth)
- **Superior** - Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto

Inferior planets show phases like the moon when viewed from Earth, while the superior planets do not.