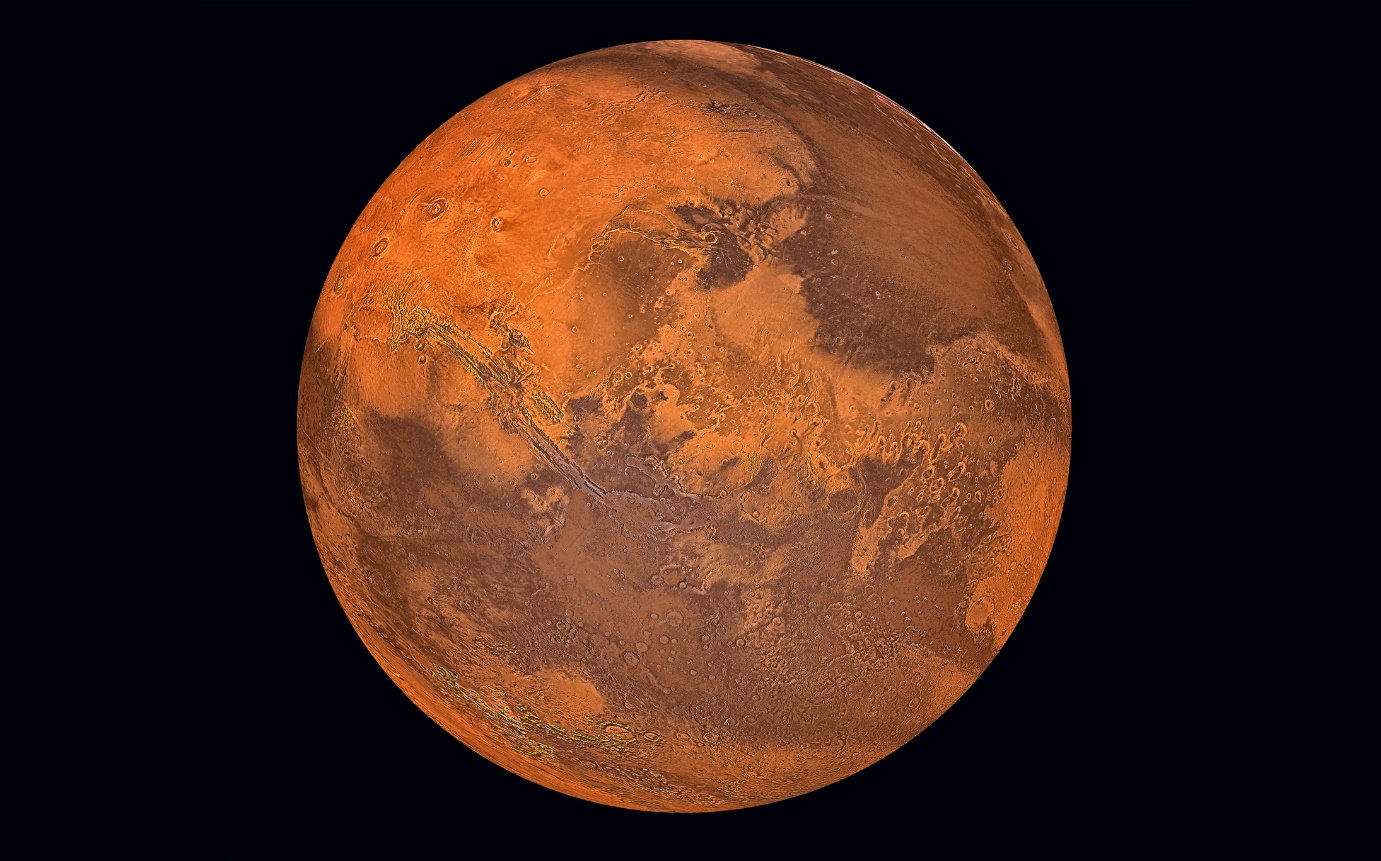
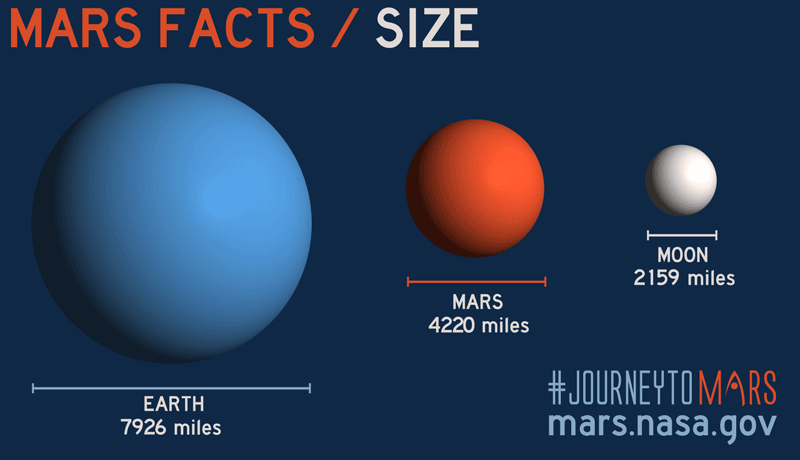
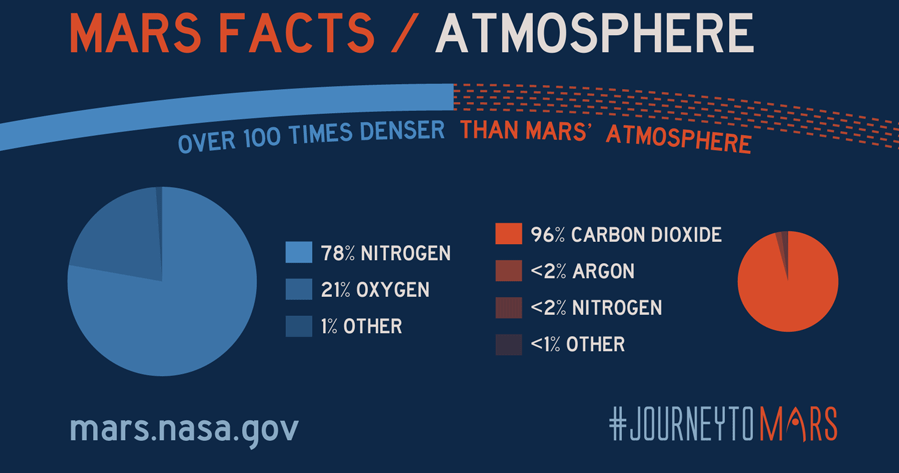
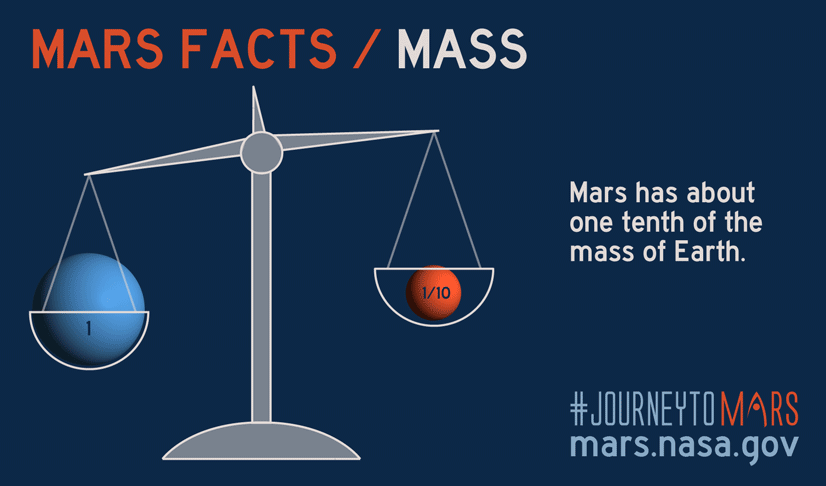
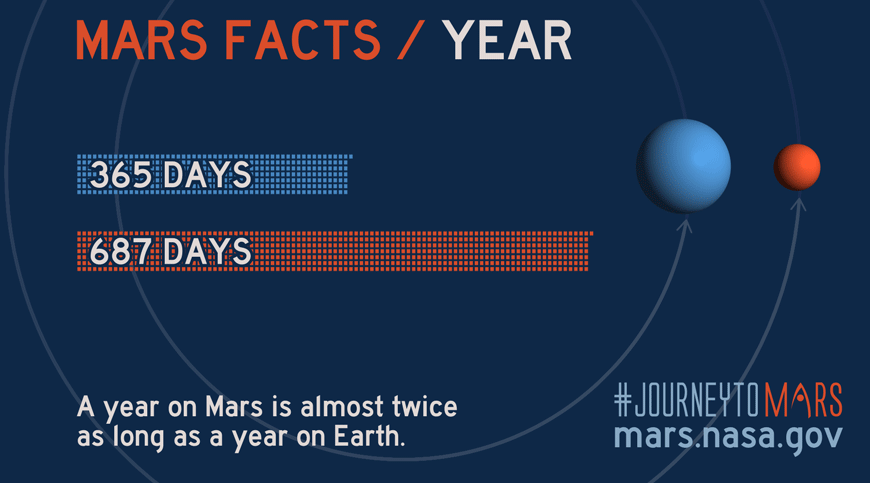
**Information Pack**

**The Planet Mars**





**Some Mars Facts**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Information | EARTH | MARS |
| Average Distance from Sun | 93 million miles | 142 million miles |
| Average Speed in Orbiting Sun | 18.5 miles per second | 14.5 miles per second |
| Diameter | 7,926 miles | 4,220 miles |
| Tilt of Axis | 23.5 degrees | 25 degrees |
| Length of Year | 365.25 Days | 687 Earth Days |
| Length of Day | 23 hours 56 minutes | 24 hours 37 minutes |
| Gravity | 2.66 times that of Mars | 0.375 that of Earth |
| Temperature | Average 57 degrees F | Average -81 degrees F |
| Atmosphere | nitrogen, oxygen, argon, others | mostly carbon dioxide, some water vapor |
| Number of Moons | 1 | 2 |

**The Martian Moons**

Mars' moons are among the smallest in the solar system. Phobos is a bit larger than Deimos, and orbits only 3,700 miles (6,000 kilometers) above the Martian surface. No known moon orbits closer to its planet. It whips around Mars three times a day, while the more distant Deimos takes 30 hours for each orbit.

To someone standing on the Mars-facing side of Phobos, Mars would take up a large part of the sky. And people may one day do just that. Scientists have discussed the possibility of using one of the Martian moons as a base from which astronauts could observe the Red Planet and launch robots to its surface, while shielded by miles of rock from cosmic rays and solar radiation for nearly two-thirds of every orbit.

**How Mars' Moons Got Their Names**

Hall named the moons for the mythological sons of Ares, the Greek counterpart of the Roman god, Mars. Phobos means fear and Deimos means dread. Fitting names for the sons of a war god

Source: [Mars Facts | All About Mars – NASA’s Mars Exploration Program](https://mars.nasa.gov/all-about-mars/facts/)



Image source: [1-curiositymar.jpg (2880×1825) (b-cdn.net)](https://scx2.b-cdn.net/gfx/news/hires/2020/1-curiositymar.jpg)

**How much do you know about the Red Planet?**

**1)** Named after the **Roman God of war**, Mars is the **fourth planet** from the sun in our [**solar system**](https://www.natgeokids.com/za/discover/science/space/ten-facts-about-space/)**.**

**2)** Mars is also known as the ‘**Red Planet**’ because, well, it’s red! This signature colour comes from the large amount of a chemical called **iron oxide** (or ‘rust’ as you might know it) in its rocks and soil.

**4)** It can get pretty cold on Mars –– much **colder than our own planet**, since it’s further away from the sun. At the equator, temperatures can reach **20°C**, but at its poles they can plummet to as low as **-140°C**. Brr!

**5)** Mars is home to the **highest mountain in our solar system** –– a volcano called **Olympus Mons**. Standing a whopping **24 kilometres high**, it’s about three times the height of Mount Everest!

**Did you know…? There are bits of Mars here on Earth! In the past, asteroids hit the Red Planet, sending debris into space. Some of this debris landed on our planet as meteorites.**

**6)** You could **jump around three times higher on Mars**than you can on Earth. Boing! This is because the planet’s **gravity** – the force that keeps us on the ground – is much weaker.

**7)**Do you like to look at the [**moon**](https://www.natgeokids.com/za/discover/science/space/facts-about-the-moon/)at night? Well, check this out –– **Mars has two moons**! One is called **Phobos** and the other **Deimos**.

**8)** A day on Mars is **24 hours and 37 minutes** –– only a little bit longer than a day on our own planet. A year on Mars, however, is almost twice as long, lasting **687 Earth days**! This is because it takes a lot longer than Earth to complete its orbit around the Sun.

**9)** Until recently, scientists believed that there was no liquid water on the surface of Mars –– only rocks, soil dust and ice. But… News flash! In 2018, they found **evidence of a lake** under the planet’s south polar ice cap. Exciting stuff!

**10)** Humans have not yet been to Mars, but scientists have sent spacecraft there to help them research this fascinating planet. The first spacecraft to land on Mars were the **Viking Landers**, which touched down on the surface in **1976**.

Source: [Facts about Mars | Facts for kids | National Geographic Kids (natgeokids.com)](https://www.natgeokids.com/za/discover/science/space/facts-about-mars/)