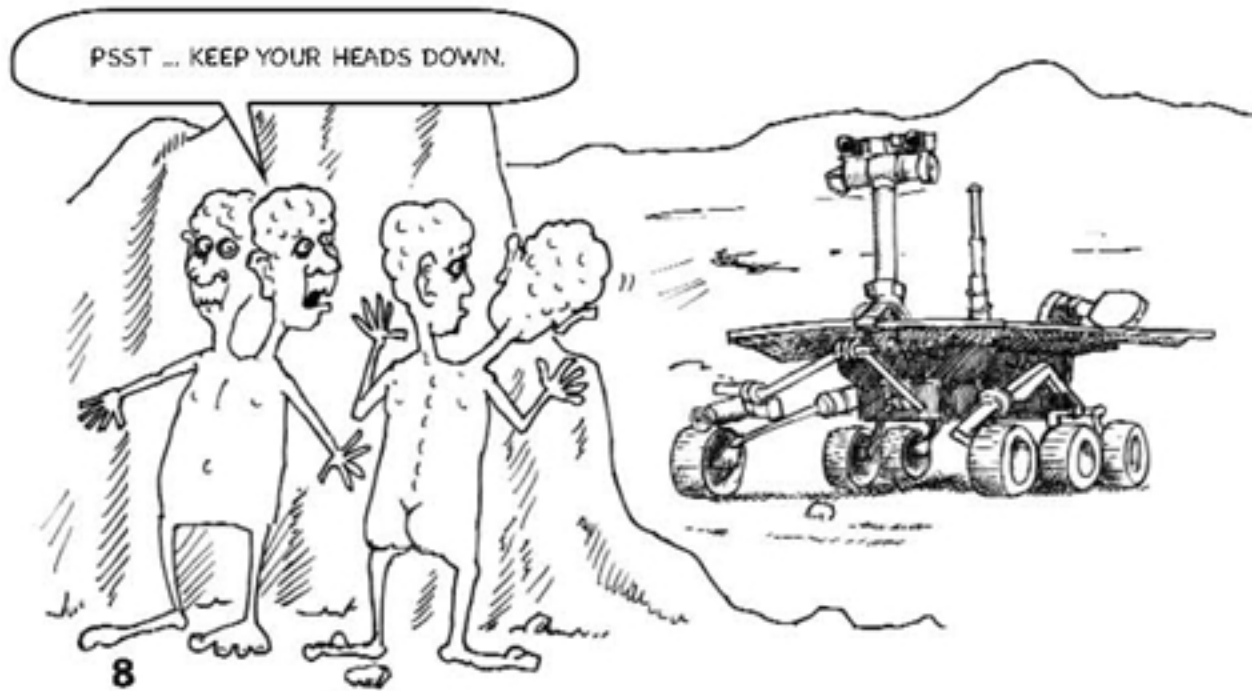


## THE RED PLANET

Mars is the fourth planet from the sun and the second closest planet to Earth.

To spot Mars in the night sky, look out for something small and bright with a reddish glow. The only things in the night's sky brighter than Mars are Venus, the moon and the sun.

If you've ever watched a film about slimy green aliens arriving from a distant planet, that planet was probably supposed to be Mars. Several satellites and a couple of robot rovers have been sent there over the years, to search for signs of life. They've found nothing yet, but have told us a lot about Mars' surface and atmosphere.



### Vital Statistics

Size:	3,390 km (half the size of Earth)
Gravity:	0.38g (that's 38% of Earth's)
Temperature:	-63 degrees Celsius (cold!)
Day:	24 hours, 41 minutes
Year:	687 Earth days (almost two Earth years)
Moons:	2
Closest distance to Earth:	36 million miles

### Did You Know?

- Named after Mars, the Roman God of War.
- Home to the largest mountain in the solar system discovered so far – Olympus Mons – which is 24 kilometres tall. That's more than three times the height of Mount Everest – the tallest mountain on Earth.
- Has the deepest canyon in the solar system – Valles Marieneris. At over 5,000 kilometres long and 100 kilometres wide, it makes the Grand Canyon in America look tiny by comparison.
- Has two moons – Phobos and Deimos. They are small and irregular shaped and may have once been asteroids.

