

# The Universe

Many scientists believe that our **universe** was created by an explosion called the **Big Bang**. *21.7 billion years ago*

The Sun is part of a huge family of stars called the **Milky Way**. There are billions of stars in the **galaxy**, some of which are large and some small. The Sun is a big ball of burning hot gases which glows like a bonfire. The Sun is our nearest star, that is why we can see it clearly. *3.6 billion years*



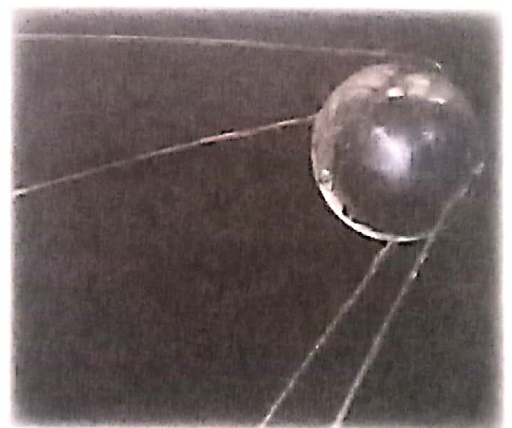
*The Milky Way Galaxy*

## THE SOLAR SYSTEM

The Sun is the source of life on Earth since it emits heat and light. It has eight heavenly bodies known as **planets** moving around it in fixed paths, that is **orbits**. This entire family is known as the **solar system**. The solar system earlier had nine planets. Find out the details of the ninth planet—Pluto.

This family is kept together by an invisible force called **gravity**. The Sun's gravity pulls on the planets and keeps them travelling around it. The word planet means 'wanderer'.

The movement of the planets around the Sun is known as **revolution**. The solar system also includes pieces of rocks, dust and companions of the planets called **satellites**. **Satellites** are bodies that move around planets. They may be natural or artificial. The Earth's natural satellite is the Moon.



*Sputnik 1—the first artificial satellite*