

Rare Chance To See Uranus Tonight

If you look up at the sky after dark today, you'll get to enjoy a rare sight. The planet Uranus will be **visible** in the night sky.

The planet is so far away that, normally, it can't be seen without special equipment. However, tonight, it'll be just about visible to the **naked eye**.

From the UK, if you look to the south-west after sunset you should spot the Moon. Look a little higher up to find Mars. It's quite bright in the sky and you may even be able to faintly spot its reddish colour.

In between these two **celestial bodies**, you'll find Uranus.

On their website, NASA says to "Scan your way over from Mars toward the Moon, and you should be able to find the faint, bluish disk of Uranus."

If you have any, make sure to dig out some

How is Uranus different to Earth?

- **Uranus is four times larger than Earth.**
- **One day on Uranus only lasts about 17 hours but one year lasts roughly the same as 84 years here on Earth.**

binoculars or a telescope to get the best view of this distant ice giant.

Uranus

The planet Uranus is the third-largest planet in the Solar System. It is the seventh planet from the Sun and 2.6 billion kilometres away from Earth.

Uranus gets its blue-green colour from a gas called methane in its **atmosphere**.



Illustration: Uranus

Temperatures there can reach -224°C , making it the coldest planet in the Solar System.

Uranus is unusual because it is actually lying on its side. It's the only planet in the Solar System which does this.

Uranus is named after the ancient Greek god of the sky, Ouranos.

Interestingly, it's the only one of the planets in our Solar System to be named after an ancient Greek god.

Apart from Earth, all the other planets are all named after Roman gods and goddesses.

Glossary

visible	Able to be seen.
naked eye	Seen without the help of equipment.
celestial bodies	An object in space such as planet or star.
atmosphere	The gases which surround a planet.

Questions

1. From which ancient civilization does the planet Uranus take its name?

2. Which facts about Uranus are **not** mentioned in the article? (**tick two**)

Uranus is 4 times bigger than Earth.

Uranus is named after a Greek God.

Uranus has 27 moons.

Uranus has rings.

3. What evidence in the text is there that Uranus is not close to Earth.

4. In the paragraph beginning: **On their website, NASA...** find a word which is similar in meaning to 'look slowly and carefully'.

5. Number the facts from 1-4 to show the order in which they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

Uranus is the third-largest planet in the Solar System.

Uranus is on its side.

1 A day on Uranus lasts 17 hours.

All the planets, apart from Earth and Uranus, are named after Roman Gods and Goddesses.

6. Summarise the key information in the article using 15 words or fewer.
