

## Neptune Is Neat (and a bit Mysterious!)

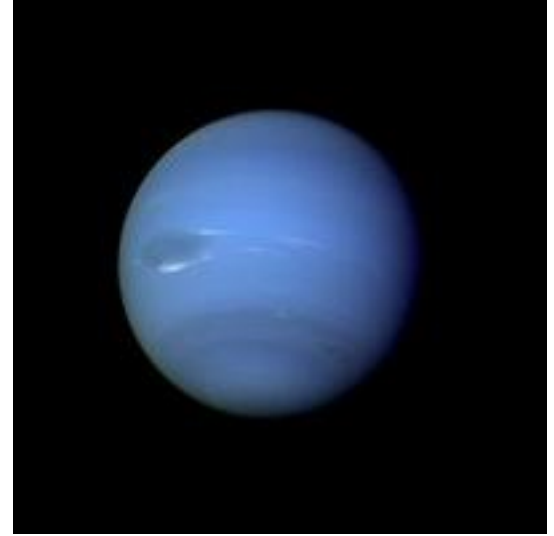
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Neptune is a neat planet. It is also a bit mysterious. Neptune is four times bigger across than Earth. It is also thirty times further away from the sun. This means that no one can see Neptune without a telescope. It is just too far away. When scientists and satellites have studied Neptune, they have learned some neat and mysterious things.

Neptune is covered with bright blue clouds. These clouds are made of frozen methane. They swirl around the planet at up to 1,300 miles per hour. That is a lot faster than any wind gust here on Earth. In 1989 *Voyager 2* found a Great Dark Spot on Neptune. This looked a lot like Jupiter's Great Red Spot. They think that it was caused by a swirling hurricane. But in 1994, it was gone! The Hubble Space Telescope could not find it. It seems to have vanished. How mysterious!

Neptune has many moons. Triton is the largest one. It orbits around Neptune once every six days. Its orbit, though, is a bit strange. Triton is the only major moon that rotates in the opposite direction of its planet. How mysterious! Scientists think that Triton was once a great comet. As a comet, it used to rotate around the sun. Then one day, Neptune's gravity pulled it in. Now, it rotates around Neptune.



Neptune is a neat and mysterious planet. Perhaps it is its mysteriousness that makes it so neat!

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## Questions

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1. Why can't Neptune be seen without a telescope?

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The author probably wrote this passage to \_\_\_\_\_.

A. Persuade you to look for Neptune  
B. Demonstrate Triton's orbit  
C. Describe some of Neptune's mysterious features  
D. Inform you about Triton

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What would have most likely happened to Triton if Neptune's gravity hadn't pulled it in?

A. It would have gotten bigger.  
B. It would still be orbiting the sun.  
C. It would have vanished.  
D. It would have gotten smaller.

