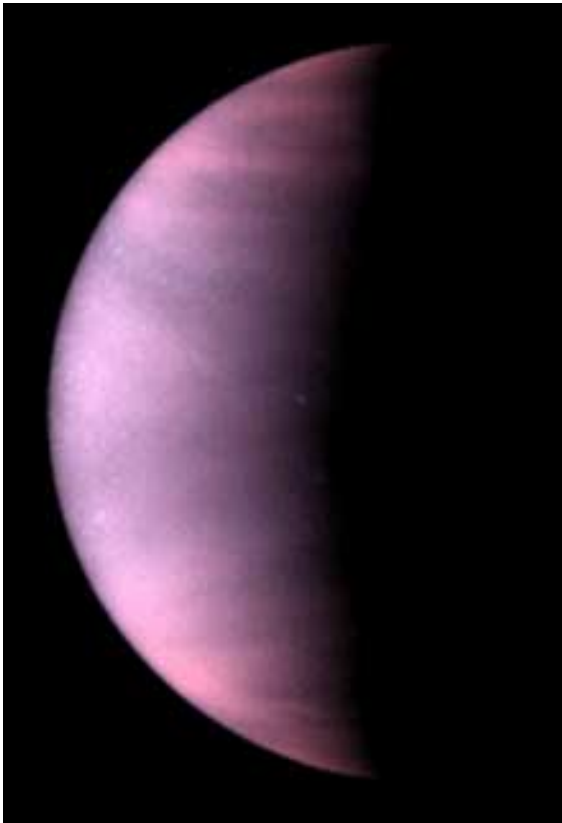


Louisiana PASS



Photograph Venus courtesy of NASA.

For more information about Venus, click on one of these links.

[Everything else you ever wanted to know about Venus](#)

[Life on Venus](#)

Note: *The links above are to websites outside the Louisiana PASS system. These links are not maintained by the Louisiana Department of Education and may not always function properly. To report a problem with one of these links, please send an e-mail to the PASS Help Desk at help@LouisianaPASS.org.*

As long as you're in the neighborhood...

What if your closest neighbor lived 25 million miles away? Well, in a planetary sense, she does! Venus is the planet closest to Earth, beating out Mars by nearly 10 million miles. But how much do you really know about your closest neighbor? While the planet takes its name from the Roman goddess of beauty, a visit to Venus would actually be a highly unattractive experience. Not only couldn't you find air to breathe, but a cold day on Venus would still be about 800° F. Even so, this planet, the second closest to the sun in our solar system, has always interested scientists throughout history.

To the ancient Aztecs, Venus was a sacred symbol of the deity Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, whose powers were intensified when Venus came into alignment with the Pleiades constellation. To the ancient Mayans, Venus was the patron planet of warfare, and Mayans often sealed off their windows and chimneys to prevent its harmful light from entering. And of course to the ancient Romans, Venus was much the opposite: a symbol of peace, love, and beauty.

Meanwhile, modern day astronomers continue to learn new information about Venus through space missions such as Mariner, Pioneer, and Magellan. And while most people you ask about Venus will assume you mean the superstar tennis player Venus Williams, you should make an effort to learn as much as you can about this fascinating planet. It's the neighborly thing to do!

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