



Image of sun courtesy of NASA

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The Star of our Solar System

Did you know that the sun is a type of star? If you travel far, far away, it will look just like any other star. What makes our sun special is that it is only 93 million miles away from us! This distance sounds far, but it's close enough to keep us warm and help us see during the daytime.

Light coming from the sun travels awfully fast (the speed of light is about 300 million meters per second), but it still takes around 8 minutes for it to get to Earth. This means that the next time you think it's too hot outside, you shouldn't blame the sun but instead the sun *8 minutes ago!*

According to most astronomers, the sun is about 4.5 billion years old, which makes the sun about middle aged when compared against the life cycle of other stars. Scientists believe there is enough hydrogen left in the sun's core to last at least another 4.5 billion years. Once this fuel is exhausted, the sun will enter its red giant phase, become slightly cooler at the surface, and shine 10,000 times brighter.

How will this change affect life on Earth 4.5 billion years from now? Nobody knows for sure, but it might be a good idea to stock up on sunscreen.

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