

Name _____

Uranus: The Mysterious Ice Giant of the Solar System

Short Answer Key

1. Uranus rotates on its side, nearly parallel to its orbital plane, making it appear to roll sideways. This is unlike most planets, which rotate with their axes roughly perpendicular to their orbits.
2. Methane is the primary component in Uranus's atmosphere responsible for its pale blue color. Methane absorbs red light and reflects blue and green light, giving the planet its distinct hue.
3. The rings of Uranus are much fainter and less prominent than those of Saturn. They are composed of dark particles and were discovered relatively recently in 1977.
4. Sir William Herschel is credited with the official discovery of Uranus in 1781. This discovery expanded our understanding of the solar system and marked a significant moment in the history of astronomy, as it was the first planet to be discovered with a telescope.
5. Uranus has not been the target of a dedicated space exploration mission primarily due to the significant distance and challenges associated with reaching the planet. Most space missions have focused on closer planets in the solar system, and reaching Uranus would require advanced spacecraft and resources.

