

Can you planet?

Why is a planet called a planet? You can discover why for yourself simply by stepping outside in late August and early September 2018. This is when dazzling Venus will dominate the Western horizon and evening twilight.



It turns out that we have the ancient Greeks to thank for this name. It is a name that means 'wandering stars' or 'wanderers'. They noticed that five stars moved of their own accord compared to the many thousands of stars that don't.

Step back in time by stepping outside in between 29 August and 3 September and watch as the planet Venus glides past the star Spica. Venus's movement is caused by a combination of its orbit around the Sun and the Earth moving in its orbit.

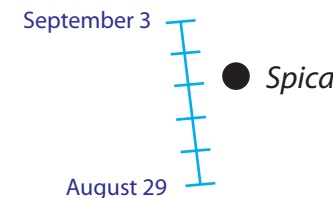
Use the chart at right to record Venus's movement relative to the stars. Step outside at 7.30 pm AEST with the chart and a pen and look West. Mark on the line where Venus is. Repeat the process a few nights later. You will discover that Venus has moved over this period.

The chart is prepared for an observer on the Gold Coast, Queensland. It will be useful for other locations in Eastern Australia.



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Venus movement recording chart 29 August - 3 September 2018 7.30 pm AEST



Western Horizon