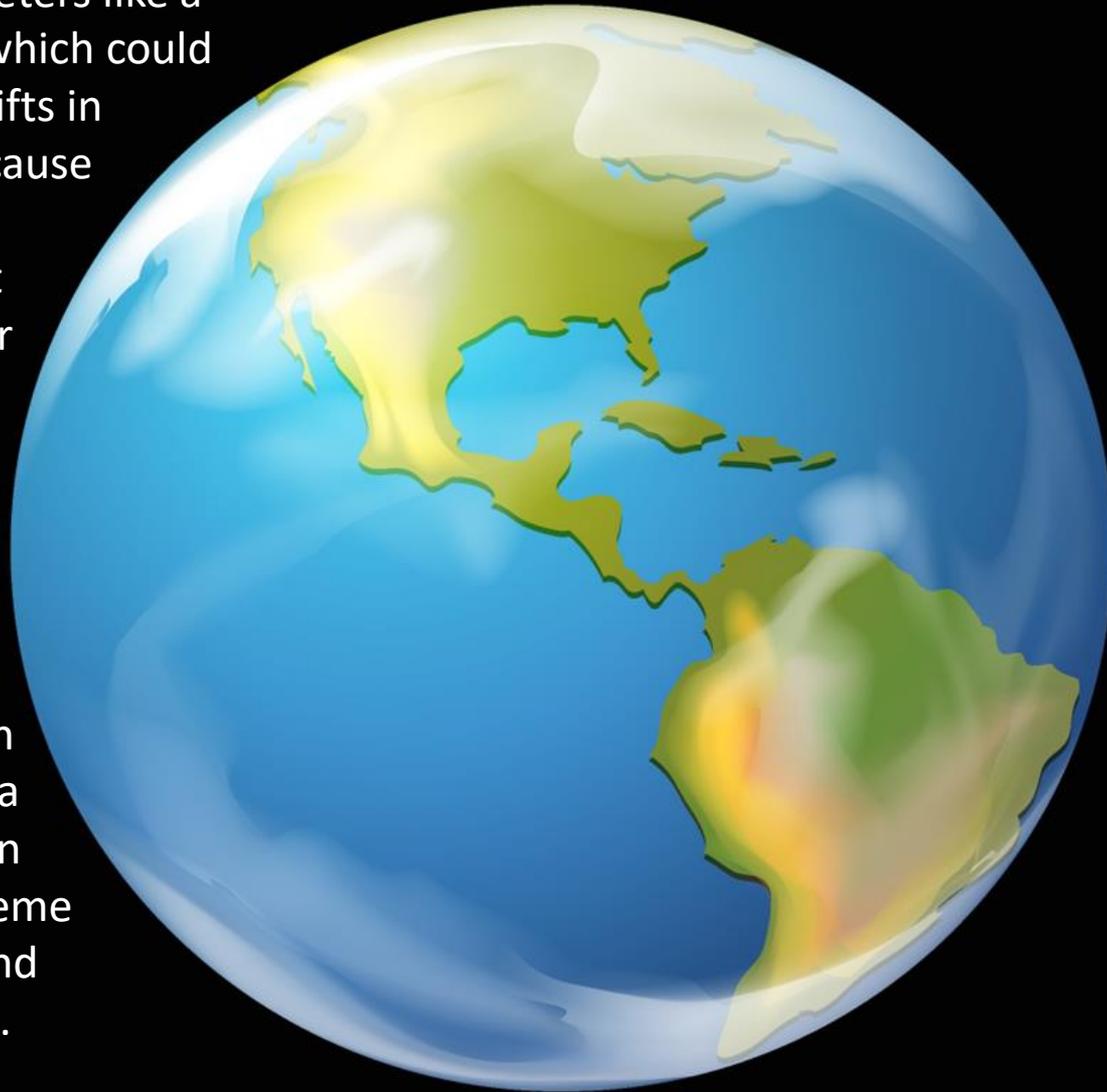


Why we Matter

When astronomers announce the discovery of an “earth-like planet,” they’re usually talking about planets with roughly earth-like gravity that are close enough to their star to be warm—but not too hot—and that may (or may not) have liquid water. But there’s a whole lot beyond those three “must-have” ingredients that makes our home planet special. Here’s an incomplete list of why, out of all the many celestial bodies, earth matters.



- The moon: The earth has a slight tilt and teeters like a top as it spins, which could cause drastic shifts in climate. But because of the moon's stabilizing effect on our orbit, our climate is a lot more stable.
- Stable rotation: The regularity and frequency of day and night on this planet play a significant role in preventing extreme temperatures and encouraging life.

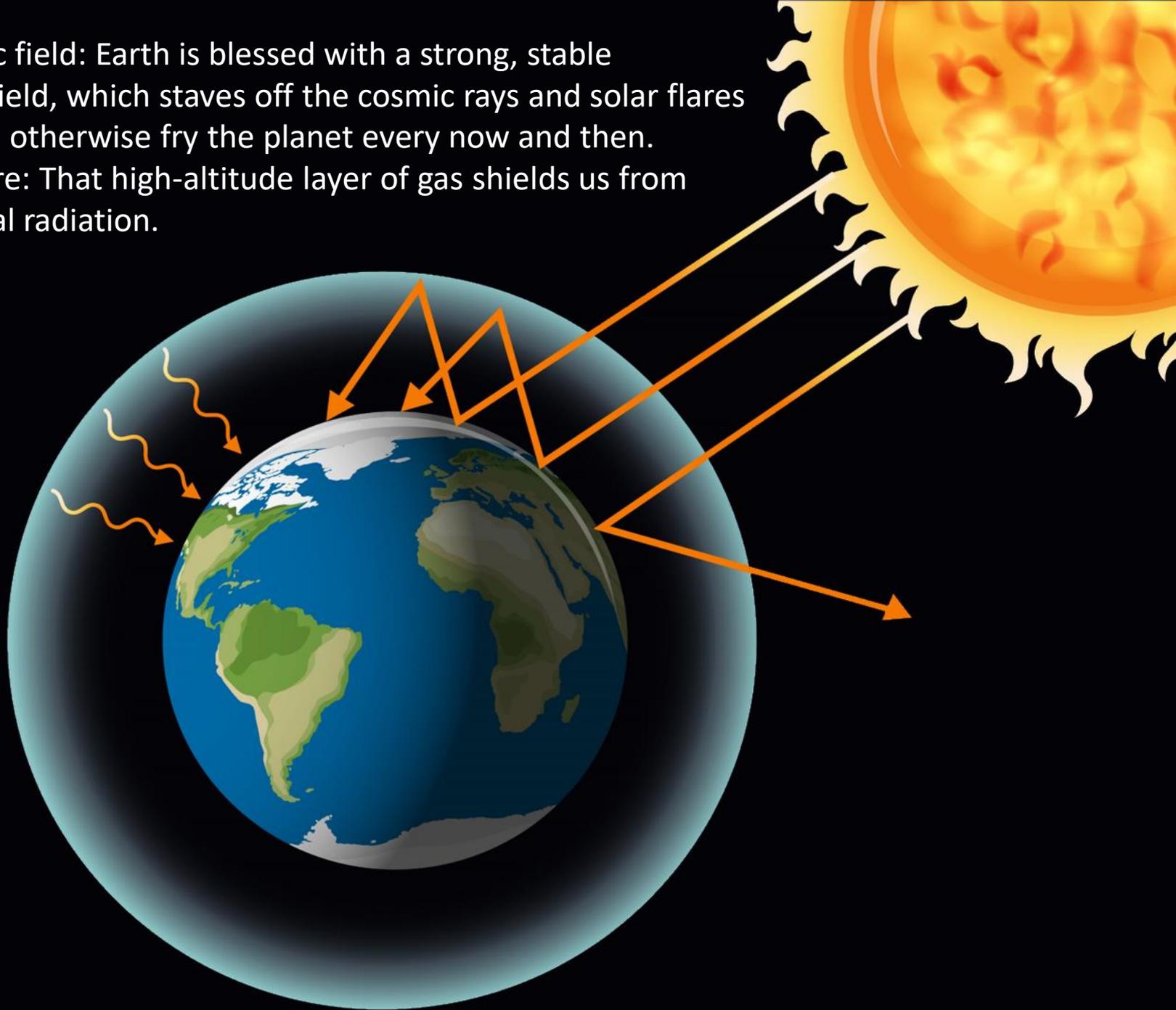


- Long-lived sun: Our sun is a yellow dwarf, a relatively rare type of star that is both small and stable. It also has a long life. Larger stars generally burn hotter and die sooner, while smaller stars tend to produce enormous plumes of radiation.



- Gas-giant neighbors: The sun and moon are essential to us, but there's another thing that helps make earth habitable: Jupiter. In general, gas giants tend to clump near their home stars. But because the ones in our solar system are beyond our planet, their intense gravity conveniently catches wayward asteroids and comets.

- A magnetic field: Earth is blessed with a strong, stable magnetic field, which staves off the cosmic rays and solar flares that would otherwise fry the planet every now and then.
- Atmosphere: That high-altitude layer of gas shields us from much lethal radiation.



These are just a few of the items on the long list of features that make earth uniquely habitable in comparison to every other planet we know of. The fact that the list of essential features is so long could suggest that life is incredibly rare, and ours may be the only planet that satisfies all the necessary conditions.



Of course, we can't know either way for sure. But the fact that the many conditions for life as we know it are all present on earth in perfect form points me toward a wonderful Creator who knew just what He was doing.

He laid out the stars and set the planets in their orbits. He caused water and snow, light and dark, laughter and love to exist for a purpose. Each of us is unique and created by a loving Creator who provided a beautiful and intricately designed planet for us to live on and enjoy.



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