

Unit 1: Moon Mystery

Narrator: Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system. It is so big that 1,300 Earths could fit inside it. Due to its size, it also has a huge number of moons. So far, 79 have been discovered, but there could be more. Of those 79, one moon is especially interesting to scientists—Europa.

It is thought that this mysterious moon might be home to other forms of life. Astronomers have known about Europa for a long time. It was discovered in 1610 by Galileo Galilei. However, scientists still do not know much about it.

Europa is slightly smaller than Earth's moon, but it looks very different. Europa's surface is covered in ice. Long lines across the moon show where the ice has cracked. It is thought that beneath the ice is a salty, water ocean, and it is here that scientists think there might be life. Water is known to be an important ingredient for life to exist.

The ocean water on Europa would be very cold, but scientists have found life in similar conditions on Earth. Future missions to Europa are being planned. Many scientists would like to send a robot to the moon's surface. Once there, a robot could drill through the ice, perhaps even deep enough to reach the ocean below. But for now, the icy moon's secrets remain a mystery.