

MARS EXPLORATION TODAY

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Since the beginning of the space age with the launch and success of Sputnik 1 in 1957, the exploration of our neighbouring planets has demonstrated the diversity of environments available around the Sun. More recently, the current extent of exoplanet discoveries — with more than a thousand planets confirmed by the Kepler mission in January 2015 — has led us to a better understanding of how the planetary systems and planets within them are formed. It also made us realise that other habitable worlds may be quite common. But as we tackle the complexity of our own planet, a definite answer to the questions of how early Earth originated and evolved to support life requires a deeper understanding of the solar system as a whole, and more specifically how Mars evolved so differently. Whether Mars harbours life or did in the past remains the most important driver of Mars exploration.
