

## Activity: A Planet's Ellipse- or- *Orbits Are NOT Circles*

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Focus

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It is easy to make an *ellipse* to show the orbit of a planet!

1. Put this page over a piece of cardboard and push a pin or thumb tack into each dot.
2. Measure 8 inches of string and tie the ends together.
3. Put the circle of string around both pins and pull it tight with a pencil.
4. Let the string guide your pencil into making an ellipse shape!
5. Give your planet something to orbit! Draw a sun at one focus.
6. Draw your planet where it would be in January. Mark it "perihelion"

**You've made a planet orbit! It is very stretched out or eccentric like the orbit of Pluto, a *DWARF PLANET*.**

1. What is an orbit?

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2. What is its shape? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why don't planets travel in a straight line?

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4. In the box below:

Draw the Sun.

Draw a planet orbiting the Sun. Make sure you show the planet's ellipse around the Sun.

