

Vocabulary

Study the vocabulary words and definitions below.

asteroids fragments of rock and metal that orbit the sun; many are in a belt between Mars and Jupiter

comet a mass of dust and ice with a bright gaseous tail that orbits the sun

constellation a small number of stars that appears to form a shape or image

elliptical galaxies galaxies that have a very bright center that contain very little dust and gas and are spherical to disklike in shape

galaxy millions or billions of stars in a system

meteors fragments of rocky material from space that burn as they fall through Earth's atmosphere; also known as meteoroids

nebula a cloud of interstellar gas and dust
(*pl.* nebulae)

orbit (noun) the path of an object revolving around another object; (verb) to revolve in a path around another object

planets bodies that revolve around a sun and reflect its light

Vocabulary

- satellite** an object that revolves around a larger object
- solar system** the sun and all the planets, their moons, asteroids, meteors, and comets; all objects that move around the sun
- spiral galaxies** disk-shaped galaxies that have a center of bright stars and flattened arms that swirl around the center, and look like a pinwheel; the solar system is part of a spiral galaxy
- stars** hot, bright bodies of gas constantly exploding in space
- stellar equilibrium** the balance between forces in a star including nuclear fusion, gravity, and the explosive force of the star
- theory** a hypothesis that has withstood the test of time
- universe** all bodies in space and all space between these bodies—all matter and all energy