

# Vocabulary

*Use the vocabulary words and definitions below as a reference for this unit.*

- 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
- light-year** ..... a unit of distance equal to the distance light travels in one year;  
 $1 \text{ ly} = 9.5 \times 10^{15} \text{ m}$
- 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

# Vocabulary

<b>planets</b> .....	bodies that revolve around a sun and reflect its light
<b>satellite</b> .....	an object that revolves around a larger object
<b>solar system</b> .....	the sun and all the planets, their moons, asteroids, meteors, and comets; all objects that move around the sun
<b>spiral galaxies</b> .....	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
<b>stars</b> .....	hot, bright bodies of gas constantly exploding in space
<b>stellar equilibrium</b> .....	the balance between forces in a star including nuclear fusion, gravity, and the explosive force of the star
<b>theory</b> .....	a hypothesis that has withstood the test of time
<b>universe</b> .....	all bodies in space and all space between these bodies—all matter and all energy