

Other Solar System Bodies

Planetary Moons: natural satellites that revolve around individual planets

↳ things that revolve around planets

Asteroids: 'minor planets' that can range in size from a metre to hundreds of kilometers

- ☆ Composed mainly of carbonaceous or silicate rock and are irregularly shaped
- ☆ Millions of asteroids are present between Mars and Jupiter in the 'asteroid belt'
- ☆ There are about 5000 identified asteroids whose orbits have been calculated- some of these have orbits close to Earth

Comets: called 'dirty snowballs' since they are mainly made of dust and ice

- ☆ Visible to the unaided eye but are usually detected using a telescope
- ☆ Billions of comets orbit the Sun at large distances
- ☆ Comets can get bumped out of their orbit and fall towards the Sun in a very long orbit. As the comet moves toward the sun, material evaporates and a tail forms. This tail always points away from the sun because it is pushed by solar wind.

Well-known Comets: Comet Halley, 1986

Comet Shoemaker-Levy, 1994

Comet Hale-Bopp, discovered in 1995, currently heading towards the Sun.

Meteors: commonly called 'shooting stars' but are NOT stars

- ☆ Pieces of rock from outer space that enter Earth's atmosphere
- ☆ Friction causes them to heat up and burn, generating visible light

Meteorites: large meteors that actually strike the Earth's surface

- ☆ They are meteors that did not burn up in the Earth's atmosphere