

StarWords



Planet – an object moving around a star (as planet Earth moves around the Sun).

Moon – an object that orbits a planet.

Star – an object that shines because of the light it creates by the energy released in nuclear reactions at its core.

Sun – the star at the centre of our Solar System.

Constellation – a group of stars which make an identifiable shape. Many constellations have traditional names from long ago. Modern astronomers have fixed the borders to the traditional constellations, so that astronomers know they are all talking about the same part of the sky when they discuss a constellation.

Galaxy – a group of stars, gas and dust held together by gravity.

Cluster – a group of stars or galaxies held together by gravity.

Meteor – a shooting star. Meteors are dust entering the Earth's atmosphere.

Asteroid – a rock that orbits the Sun.

Comet – a small icy object of made of gas and dust, which orbits the Sun.

Nebula – a cloud of dust and gas.

Black hole – an area that has such strong gravity that not even light can escape from around it. Scientists believe the smallest black holes are the size of an atom with the mass of a mountain.

Dark matter – Dark matter is theoretical matter, no one has actually seen it. In fact, that's why scientists believe it exists – scientists proposed dark matter to explain why most of the matter in the Universe cannot be seen.

Light year – the distance a ray of light travels in one year, about 6 trillion miles! (That's 6,000,000,000,000.)

Red giant – a dying star. It's red because it is cooler than the white-yellow colour of an average star.

White dwarf – a remnant of a dying star. It no longer has the energy in it to continue with nuclear reactions at its core.

Supernova – the explosion of an enormous star. The heat and energy in a supernova make all the naturally occurring elements in the universe.

Multiverse – the possible world in which infinite parallel universes co-exist. (Is your head hurting? Some cosmologists believe that there really are countless universes out there, going on for ever... and ever... and ever...).

