

The Solar System

How the Solar System Formed

After the Sun formed, the leftover _____, _____ and other debris in the nebula continued to spin, creating a disk around the new star.

Small bodies began to form, growing into the _____, _____, _____, and _____ that make up the solar system.

A planet is a _____ object that orbits one or more _____ and is capable of forming into a _____ shape under its own weight due to _____. A planet does not create and radiate its own _____, it merely _____ the light of the star it _____.

The Rocky Inner Planets

As the particles of _____ and _____ slammed into one another, they began sticking together. As they got bigger in _____, gravity caused them to bind together more strongly. Objects _____ too close to the _____ gradually fell into it, drawn by its _____ force, and _____ up. However, _____ large objects lasted and eventually formed into the _____ planets, _____, _____, _____ and _____.

Earth's Moon

Within a few hundred million years of forming, the young _____ may have been struck by an object nearly the size of _____. The rocky crusts of the two objects mixed and the larger object cooled down to become _____ as we know it today. The smaller object likely formed from material torn from _____ after this collision became trapped by Earth's _____. It existed first as debris and rubble, but eventually it compacted into a new object, _____.

The Gaseous Outer Planets

The _____ blows gases away from the Sun. Beyond the _____, water can cool to form droplets and then _____. It is believed that the _____ largest planets in the solar system grew as _____ acted as a kind of glue to cause _____ and _____ particles in the outer regions of the solar system to stick together. The result was the four gas _____: _____, _____, _____ and _____. All of the _____ are orbited by numerous _____. Jupiter and Saturn each have more than _____ moons.

The Minor Planets

Beyond the gas giants are a number of very large balls of _____. These are called minor or _____ planets, the most famous of which is _____. There are millions of small objects like Pluto orbiting the sun. Together they create a thin _____ like the _____ that forms a ring around the entire _____. About _____ of these are large enough to be considered minor planets.

Comets and Meteors

The most distant region of the solar system is the _____ Cloud. It consists of billions of fragments of _____ and _____ and is a major source of _____. A comet is a celestial object made of _____ and _____. When a _____ disturbance causes a comet to change its orbit and fall nearer the Sun, the Sun heats the comet, causing some of its _____ particles to break away and spread into a _____ millions of kilometers long, lit up by the _____. Comets can sometimes be seen from _____, passing across the sky over several _____. Also visible from Earth are _____, often incorrectly referred as shooting stars. These are small pieces of rock or _____ that travel through the _____ with no fixed path. A meteor is a _____ that has entered Earth's _____ and burns up as a result of friction. If a meteor does not completely burn up and hits the surface, it is called a _____.