

# WORD BANK

Asteroids

Ceres

Sun

Planets

Craters

Moon

Meteorites

Comets

Kuiper Belt

Orbit

Star

Tail

Earth

Oort Cloud

Asteroid Belt

Moons

Solar System

# EXPLORING THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

**Can you complete this description of the solar system?**

The sun is a Star located at the center of our Solar System. Our home, called Earth, is one of eight Planets that orbit around the Sun. Earth has one Moon that orbits around it each month showing different phases. Some planets have many Moons that Orbit around them.

There are other objects in our solar system that orbit the sun. Asteroids are small, rocky fragments left over from the formation of the solar system. They are too small to be planets; most are located in the Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter. The largest object in the asteroid belt is Ceres\*.

Comets are space snowballs of frozen gases, rock, and dust that come from the Kuiper Belt beyond Neptune or the Oort Cloud at the edge of our solar system. As comets travel near the sun, they heat up and develop a Tail.

Space rocks become Meteorites when they land on a planet's surface. Large space rock impacts can cause Craters.

\*Ceres was long labeled as an asteroid, but was reclassified as a dwarf planet when Pluto was "demoted." Pallas is now the largest asteroid.

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