

METEOR STREAKS AND STRIKES

Did you know, if you stand outdoors on a clear night, you might see a meteor streak across the heavens. Sometimes a *meteor* is called a *Shooting Star* or a *Falling Star*, but it isn't really a star.

A meteor is a chunk of rock or metallic rock that orbits the sun. Sometimes the Earth gets in a meteor's way and it gets pulled into the Earth's atmosphere. As it speeds downward through the atmosphere, it burns up in a fiery streak of color. The color reveals what the meteor contains. For example, a greenish color means there is some copper in the meteor. This flash of light and color lasts only a few seconds before the rock either breaks apart, burns to dust, or hits the ground.

LOOK IT UP!

Look up the word "meteor" in a dictionary. You will find three different forms of the word. Scientists use these words to identify the condition of a meteor. Define these three forms:

meteor:

meteoroid:

meteorite:

USE IT!

Now use these words in the sentences below according to their proper meanings:

A _____ streaked overhead last night while I was stargazing!

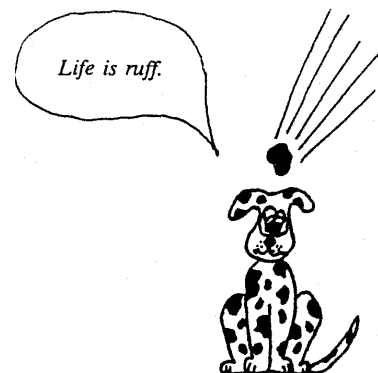
Astronauts saw a _____ sailing between the moon and earth.

A large _____ left an impact crater on Mercury.

Explore More!

There are four kinds of meteors. Use an encyclopedia or the internet to find out what they are. What are the differences between types of meteors?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1954, a meteorite crashed through the roof of a house in Alabama and hit a woman asleep in a bedroom! She was badly bruised. The only known fatality from a meteorite was in New Zealand where a dog was hit in 1911!