

## Sun, Moon, and Stars Glossary Definitions CR 2009

**Astronomer** A scientist who studies objects in the universe including the stars, planets, and moons. (TG, SRB)

**Axis** An imaginary line around which a sphere, like a planet, rotates. (SRB)

**Big Dipper** A group of seven bright stars in the shape of a dipper. (SRB)

**Black hole** A region in space without light that has a strong gravitational pull. A black hole is caused by the collapse of stars. (SRB)

**Cardinal directions** The four main points on a compass: north, south, east, and west. (TG)

**Compass** A tool used to determine directions. (TG)

**Constellation** A group of stars humans observe in a pattern and give a name. (TG, SRB)

**Crescent** A word used to describe the curved shape of the visible part of the Moon before and after a new Moon. (TG, SRB)

**Cycle** A set of events or actions that repeat in a predictable pattern. (TG, SRB)

**Day** The time between sunrise and sunset on Earth when it is light. (TG, SRB)

**East** One of the four cardinal directions. The point where the Sun rises. (TG)

**First-quarter Moon** A phase of the Moon in the lunar cycle halfway between a new Moon and a full Moon. The Moon appears to be a “half Moon” as seen from Earth. (TG, SRB)

**Full Moon** A phase of the Moon in the lunar cycle when all of the sunlit side of the Moon is visible from Earth. (TG, SRB)

**Galaxy** A group of billions of stars. Earth is in the Milky Way galaxy. (SRB)

**Gibbous** A word used to describe the Moon when it appears to be more than half but less than full. (TG, SRB)

**Gravity** A force that pulls objects toward each other. (SRB)

**Horizon** The apparent boundary between Earth’s surface and the sky. (SRB)

**Lunar cycle** The 4-week period during which the Moon orbits Earth one time and goes through all of its phases. (TG, SRB)

**Magnify** To make an object appear larger in size. (TG, SRB)

**Matter** Anything that takes up space and has mass. (SRB)

**Milky Way** One of the billions of galaxies that make up the universe. The Sun is one of the billions of stars in the Milky Way galaxy. (SRB)

**Moon** Earth's natural satellite. (TG, SRB)

**New Moon** The phase of the Moon in the lunar cycle when the sunlit side of the Moon is not visible from Earth. (TG, SRB)

**Night** The time between sunset and sunrise on Earth when it is dark. (TG, SRB)

**North** One of the four cardinal directions. (TG)

**Observatory** A building that protects telescopes. Observatories are often found on mountain peaks above the dust and pollution in the air. (SRB)

**Orbit** To move or travel around an object in a curved path. Earth orbits the Sun. The Moon orbits Earth. (TG, SRB)

**Phase** The shape of the visible part of the Moon. (TG, SRB)

**Planet** A large, celestial body orbiting a star. (TG, SRB)

**Planetarium** A theater with a dome-shaped ceiling that represents the sky. Planets, stars, and galaxies can be projected on the inside of the dome. (SRB)

**Predictable** To estimate accurately in advance based on a pattern or previous knowledge. (TG, SRB)

**Reflect** To bounce off an object or surface. Light reflects from the Moon. (SRB)

**Rotate** To turn on an axis. (TG, SRB)

**Satellite** An object, such as a moon, that orbits another object, such as a planet. (SRB)

**Season** The four times during the year that bring predictable weather conditions to a region on Earth. The four seasons are spring, summer, fall, and winter. (TG, SRB)

**Shadow** The dark area behind an object that blocks light. (TG, SRB)

**Solar system** The Sun and the planets and other objects that orbit the Sun. (SRB)

**South** One of the four cardinal directions. (TG)

**Star** A huge sphere of hydrogen and helium that radiates heat and light. The Sun is a star. (TG, SRB)

**Sun** The star around which Earth and other planets orbit. (TG, SRB)

**Sunlight** Light from the Sun. (SRB)

**Sunrise** The time of day when the Sun is coming over the horizon in the east. (SRB)

**Sunset** The time of day when the Sun is going below the horizon in the west. (SRB)

**Telescope** An optical instrument that makes objects appear closer and larger. (TG, SRB)

**Third-quarter Moon** The phase of the Moon in the lunar cycle halfway between the full Moon and the new Moon. The Moon appears from Earth to be a “half Moon.” Unaided eyes Looking at something without the use of a telescope or microscope. (TG, SRB)

**Unaided eyes** Looking at something without the use of a telescope or microscope. (SRB)

**Waning** Getting smaller. (TG, SRB)

**Waxing** Getting larger. (TG, SRB)

**West** One of the four cardinal directions. The point where the Sun sets. (TG)