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astronomical unit eccentricity ellipse planetesimal retrograde motion

scarp terrestrial planet belt gas giant planet liquid metallic hydrogen

zone comet dwarf planet Kuiper belt meteor

meteorite meteoroid meteor shower

1. Comet - small, eccentrically orbiting body made of rock and ice which have one or more tails that point away from the Sun.
2. Meteorite – a small fragment of an orbiting body that has fallen to Earth, generating heat; does not completely burn up in Earth’s atmosphere and strikes Earth’s surface, sometimes causing an impact crater.
3. Belt – low, warm, dark-colored cloud that sinks and flows rapidly in the Jovian atmosphere.
4. Scarp – cliff on Mercury; similar to those on Earth but much higher.
5. Meteor – streak of light produced when a meteoroid falls toward Earth and burns up in Earth’s atmosphere.
6. Planetesimal – space object built of particles that can form planets through collisions and mergers.
7. Dwarf planet – an object that, due to its own gravity, is spherical in shape, orbits the Sun, is not a satellite, and has not cleared the area of its orbit of smaller debris.
8. Meteor shower – occurs when Earth intersects a cometary orbit and comet particles burn up as they enter Earth’s upper atmosphere.
9. Astronomical unit – the average distance between the Sun and Earth, 1.496 X 10⁸ km or 1 AU.
10. Meteoroid – piece of interplanetary material that falls towards Earth and enters its atmosphere.
11. Gas giant planet – large, gaseous planet that is very cold at its surface; has ring systems, many moons, and lacks solid surfaces – Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.
12. Kuiper belt – region of the space that lies outside the orbit of Neptune, 30 to 50 AU from the Sun, where small solar system bodies that are mostly rock and ice probably formed.
13. Zone – high, cool, light-colored cloud that rises and flows rapidly in the Jovian atmosphere.
14. Liquid metallic hydrogen – form of hydrogen with both liquid and metallic properties that exists as a layer in the Jovian atmosphere.
15. Terrestrial planet – one of the rocky-surfaced, relatively small, dense inner planets closest to the Sun; Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.
16. Retrograde motion – a planet’s apparent backward movement in the sky.
17. Ellipse – an oval that is centered on two points called foci; the shape of planets’ orbits.
18. Eccentricity – ration of the distance between the foci to the length of the major axis; defines the shape of a planet’s elliptical orbit.