

Observing Moon Phases

Discussion Questions

Name _____ KEY _____

1. Did the moon change its shape during the time you watched it?

The moon did change its shape during the time the students watched it.

2. Was there any order, or pattern, to the way its shape changed? If so, what was this pattern?

Yes, there was a pattern to the way the moon's shaped changed. It started out as just a sliver (crescent) and got a little bigger each evening. At the end of the two weeks it was a full circle.

3. When did you see the smallest part of the moon – at the beginning or end of your observation?

At the beginning of the observation. A waxing moon.

4. When did you see the largest part of the moon – at the beginning or end or your observation?

At the end of the observation. A full moon.

5. What is the phase of the moon when it looks banana shaped?

Crescent

6. What is the phase of the moon when it looks like half of a circle?

First Quarter (Third Quarter Moon is also acceptable)

7. What is the moon's phase when it looks to be a complete circle?

Full Moon

8. What causes the phases of the moon?

As the moon orbits Earth the amount of the sunlit half that we see changes. At the beginning of the cycle, we only see a very small portion of the sunlit half; after one week we see half of the sunlit half; and after two weeks the entire sunlit half can be seen.