



The Moon has many, many different names. It is called Luna by the Romans, Selene and Artemis by the Greeks, and many other names in other mythologies. This is the symbol for the Moon:



The Moon is the Earth's only natural satellite. It is the second brightest object in the sky (after the Sun).

The Moon was first visited by the Soviet spacecraft Luna 2 in 1959. It is the only extraterrestrial body

to have been visited by humans. The first landing was on July 20, 1969. The last time we visited the Moon was in December 1972. The Moon is also the only body from which samples have been returned to Earth. In the summer of 1994, the Moon was very extensively mapped by the little spacecraft Clementine.



A total of 382 kg of rock samples were returned to the Earth by the Apollo and Luna programs. These provide most of our detailed knowledge of the Moon. They are particularly valuable in that they can be dated. Even today, 20 years after the last Moon landing, scientists still study these precious samples.

There are two primary types of terrain on the Moon: the heavily cratered and very old "highlands" and the relatively smooth and younger "maria." The maria are the large dark spots you see when you look up at the moon.



What happens during a lunar eclipse? The Moon becomes dark and a reddish-copper colour for a short time. This occurs when the Moon passes through the Earth's shadow. The reddish-copper coloration comes from the sunlight being deflected through the Earth's atmosphere.

Check out the phases of the Moon! The Moon changes phases on a regular cycle. This cycle takes about 29 days to complete. Starting at what's called the "New Moon," the Moon goes through four main stages: First quarter (1



week), Full Moon (2nd week), Third quarter (3rd week) and New Moon (4th week). "Moonlight" is really light from the Sun being reflected off of the Moon's surface. As the Moon orbits the Earth, it changes position. How much light is reflected from the Moon depends on where in its orbit (or "path").

- ~ The Moon spins on its axis in the same time it takes to orbit the Earth. It always keeps the same face turned towards the Earth.
- ~ The Moon's gravity tugs on the Earth and pulls the ocean towards it. This makes the tides.
- ~ The Moon has a diameter of 3467 kilometres.
- ~ The Moon takes 27.3 days to go around the Earth once.
- ~ Any object on the Moon will weigh six times less than it does on Earth.