Name _____ Date _____



The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

What Is a Meteor?

Space is full of tiny bits of rock and dust. A bit like this is called a **meteoroid**. Most are no bigger than a grain of sand, and few are bigger than a pea. Every day, many meteoroids race into Earth's **atmosphere**, the layer of air that surrounds our planet. It travels so fast that it heats up and glows. The bright streak of light it makes is called a **meteor**. People often call it a shooting star, but it is not a star at all. Most meteors burn up completely, high above the ground. If a piece survives the fall and lands on Earth, it is called a **meteorite**.



1. A meteor is a real star. **true** **false**

2. A piece of space rock that lands on the ground is called a ___ **meteor** **meteoroid** **meteorite**

3. What is Earth's atmosphere?

_____

4. Why does a meteoroid glow when it races into the atmosphere?

_____

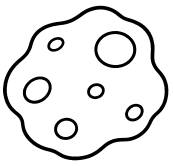
5. Explain how a meteoroid, a meteor and a meteorite are different.

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

The Geminids

A **meteor shower** is a time, often several nights, when many meteors streak across the sky. One of the best showers of the year is the **Geminids**, which is strongest around the night of December 13 to 14. Under a very dark sky, you might see a meteor every minute or two. The meteors all seem to come from one point in the sky, called the **radiant**. For this shower, the radiant lies in the **constellation** Gemini, which gives the Geminids their name. Most meteor showers come from **comets**, balls of ice and dust that travel around the sun. The Geminids are unusual. They come from a rocky object called Phaethon. Each December, Earth passes through the trail of dust that Phaethon has left behind, and the bits burn up in our sky.

---

1. The Geminids are strongest around ____ **January 1** **December 13 to 14** **December 1**

2. Most meteor showers come from comets. **true** **false**

3. What is a radiant?

_____

4. Why do the Geminids come back every December?

_____

5. How are the Geminids different from most meteor showers?

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

How to Watch

You do not need a telescope or binoculars to watch a meteor shower. All you need is your eyes, a clear night and a dark place, far from city lights. Lie back on a blanket or a reclining chair, and look up at as much of the sky as you can. Then be patient. It takes about half an hour for your eyes to adjust to the dark, and a single glance at a bright phone screen can undo much of it. In the north, the Geminids begin to appear around 9 or 10 p.m., so you do not have to stay up all night. In Australia and New Zealand, the meteors start later in the night, and fewer are seen.

---

1. You need binoculars to see a meteor shower. **true** **false**

2. About how long do your eyes need to adjust to the dark? **one minute** **half an hour** **two hours**

3. Why should you keep your phone in your pocket while you watch?

_____

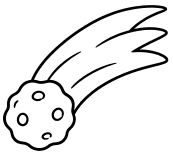
4. How is watching the Geminids different in Australia and New Zealand?

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Geminid Meteor Shower

Draw a line from each space word to what it means.

meteoroid	a streak of light made by a bit of rock burning up in the air
meteor	the point in the sky that a shower's meteors seem to come from
meteorite	a time when many meteors can be seen
meteor shower	the layer of air that surrounds Earth
comet	a group of stars that people see as a shape
constellation	a tiny bit of rock or dust in space
radiant	a piece of rock from space that lands on the ground
atmosphere	a ball of ice and dust that travels around the sun

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Name _____ Date _____

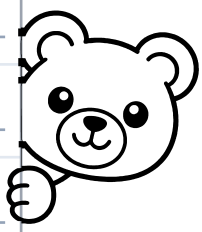


The Geminid Meteor Shower

Keep a sky-watching log. Count the meteors you see.

Watch the sky with a grown-up. Every 15 minutes, write the time and make a tally mark for each meteor you saw. Note how bright the streaks were and where in the sky they went.

	Time	Meteors I counted	What I noticed
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			



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The Geminid Meteor Shower

Write a story and a how-to about the Geminids.

Imagine you are a tiny bit of Phaethon's dust. Tell the story of your trip into Earth's atmosphere on a December night.

A friend has never watched a meteor shower. Using what you read, explain how to get ready, where to go and what to do.

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The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

What Is a Meteor?

Space is full of tiny bits of rock and dust. A bit like this is called a **meteoroid**. Most are no bigger than a grain of sand, and few are bigger than a pea. Every day, many meteoroids race into Earth's **atmosphere**, the layer of air that surrounds our planet. It travels so fast that it heats up and glows. The bright streak of light it makes is called a **meteor**. People often call it a shooting star, but it is not a star at all. Most meteors burn up completely, high above the ground. If a piece survives the fall and lands on Earth, it is called a **meteorite**.



---

1. A meteor is a real star. **true** **(false)**

2. A piece of space rock that lands on the ground is called a ___ **meteor** **meteoroid** **(meteorite)**

3. What is Earth's atmosphere?

The layer of air that surrounds our planet.

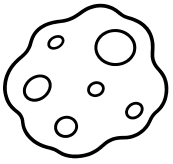
4. Why does a meteoroid glow when it races into the atmosphere?

It travels so fast that it heats up.

5. Explain how a meteoroid, a meteor and a meteorite are different.

A meteoroid is a bit of rock in space, a meteor is the streak of light it makes in the air, and a meteorite is a piece that lands.

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The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

The Geminids

A **meteor shower** is a time, often several nights, when many meteors streak across the sky. One of the best showers of the year is the **Geminids**, which is strongest around the night of December 13 to 14. Under a very dark sky, you might see a meteor every minute or two. The meteors all seem to come from one point in the sky, called the **radiant**. For this shower, the radiant lies in the **constellation** Gemini, which gives the Geminids their name. Most meteor showers come from **comets**, balls of ice and dust that travel around the sun. The Geminids are unusual. They come from a rocky object called Phaethon. Each December, Earth passes through the trail of dust that Phaethon has left behind, and the bits burn up in our sky.

---

1. The Geminids are strongest around ____ **January 1** **December 13 to 14** **December 1**

2. Most meteor showers come from comets. **true** **false**

3. What is a radiant?

The point in the sky that a shower's meteors seem to come from.

4. Why do the Geminids come back every December?

Each December, Earth passes through the dust Phaethon has left behind.

5. How are the Geminids different from most meteor showers?

Most showers come from comets, but the Geminids come from a rocky object called Phaethon.

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The Geminid Meteor Shower

Read the text. Then answer the questions.

How to Watch

You do not need a telescope or binoculars to watch a meteor shower. All you need is your eyes, a clear night and a dark place, far from city lights. Lie back on a blanket or a reclining chair, and look up at as much of the sky as you can. Then be patient. It takes about half an hour for your eyes to adjust to the dark, and a single glance at a bright phone screen can undo much of it. In the north, the Geminids begin to appear around 9 or 10 p.m., so you do not have to stay up all night. In Australia and New Zealand, the meteors start later in the night, and fewer are seen.

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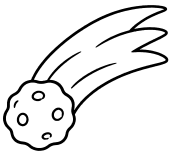
3. Why should you keep your phone in your pocket while you watch?

One glance at a bright screen undoes your eyes getting used to the dark.

4. How is watching the Geminids different in Australia and New Zealand?

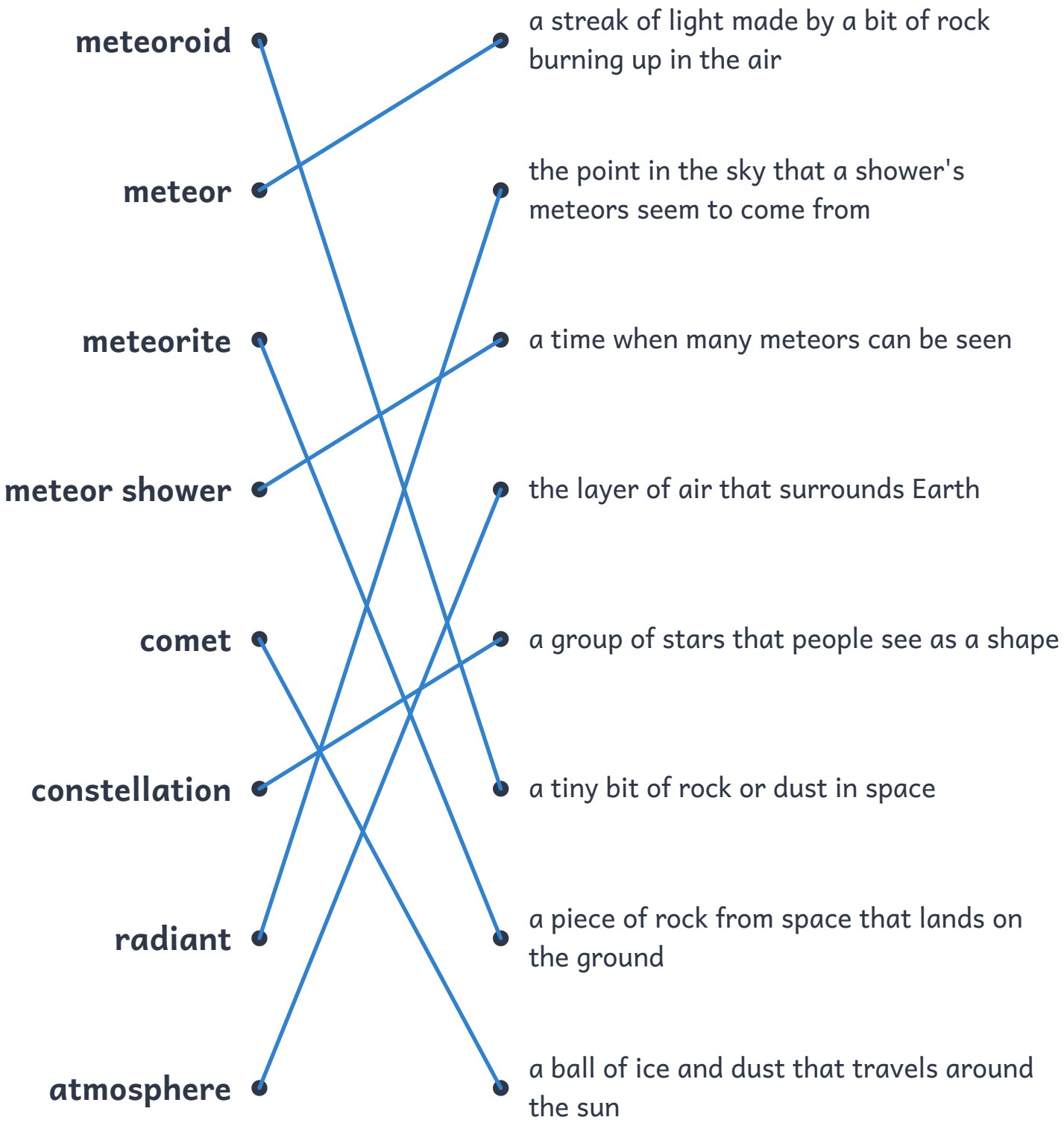
The meteors start later in the night there, and fewer are seen.

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The Geminid Meteor Shower

Draw a line from each space word to what it means.



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