



Meteorites

Meteorites are **rocks from outer space**. They're important because they provide us with **evidence as to how our Earth formed**.

The Earth is about 4.5 billion years old. The sun is slightly older, about 4.6 billion years old. After the sun formed from a giant cloud of dust and gas, the remaining dust clumped together to form rocks called chondrites. These rocks then started smashing together and sticking together to eventually form not only the Earth, but also the planets Mercury, Venus, and Mars.

The leftover chondrites are floating around in the asteroid belt. When one floats close enough to get caught by Earth's gravity, it falls to the Earth as a meteorite.

Vocabulary:

Meteoroid: a small rock moving through space

Meteor: the visible streak of light that results from a small rock or piece of dust entering the atmosphere

Meteorite: a rock that falls to Earth from space

Chondrites: a stony meteorite that contains chondrules

Chondrules: small, round grains formed as molten or partially molten droplets in space; they are one of the oldest solid materials in the Solar System; they are believed to be the building blocks of the rocky planets