

# What are Comets?

## Student Worksheet

### Read the following

Follow the following procedures.

### Procedures

1. Go to [www.kids.infoplease.lycos.com.science/html](http://www.kids.infoplease.lycos.com.science/html).
2. Scroll down to **Stars and Planets** and click.
3. Scroll down to **Comets** and click.
4. Answer the questions, or fill in the blanks below.

### Section 1

1. Comets are enormous " \_\_\_\_\_ " of frozen gases ( \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ) and contain very little \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. What did people in the Middle Ages think about comets?
3. What did people in Roman times call a comet?
4. Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) was an astronomer who measured the motion of the comet of 1577. He showed that the comet had been... \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. This proved that comets were \_\_\_\_\_ and not meteorological phenomena.
6. Dr. Edmund Halley (1656-1742) concluded that a comet could move around the sun in a closed orbit like the planets. What did people call the comet that appeared 16 years after Dr. Halley's death and again in 1986?
7. Why did several spacecraft go into space in 1986?

# What are Comets? (continued)

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8. Astronomers refer to comets as \_\_\_\_\_.
9. What does non-periodic mean?
10. What is the shortest known period for a comet?
11. When a comet's outline looks fuzzy it is said to have developed a "coma." What does the latin word *coma* mean?
12. A comet's tail always points \_\_\_\_\_ from the sun.
13. Can a comet "grow" another tail?
14. Even though comets don't weigh a lot, they are one of the largest members of our solar system. Why?
15. What was the name of the comet that crashed into Jupiter in 1994?

## Section 2

Finished?

Click the back arrow once.

Find and click on **Your Weight and Age on Other Planets**.

Use the space below to complete your calculations.