



Name _____ Date _____

NAME THOSE ASTEROIDS!

There are many cool objects flying around in space. Do you know the difference between an asteroid, a comet, a meteor, and a meteorite? Try the activity below to learn more!

Read the sentences below to learn about three asteroids that were named after famous people. Conduct an Internet search to find out who these people were. Use the information to complete the sentences.

- 1 The asteroid 3352 McAuliffe is named after Christa McAuliffe, who was _____

- 2 The asteroid 2266 Tchaikovsky is named after a Russian music composer who _____

- 3 The asteroid 2578 Saint-Exupéry is named after Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who _____

BONUS!

On a separate sheet of paper, can you explain why the following asteroids are famous?

- 433 Eros
- 1 Ceres
- 4 Vesta
- 2060 Chiron
- 3200 Phaethon
- 1862 Apollo

Do You Know the Difference Between an Asteroid, a Comet, and a Meteor?

Asteroids are generally large chunks of rock that come from the Leonid asteroid belt. Comets look like asteroids, except they are covered with compounds that make a fuzzy, cloud-like shell. A meteor is the flash of light that we see in the night sky when smaller bits of asteroids or comets burn up as they pass through Earth's atmosphere.

Asteroids Can Have Three Names!

An asteroid's first name: When an asteroid is found, it is given a temporary name, showing what year it was found.

An asteroid's second name: After the asteroid's orbit is known well, it gets assigned a number.

An asteroid's third name: Finally, an asteroid can be given a "real" name by the person who found it.

For example: The asteroid named "3551 1983RD" has a first name (1983RD, which shows it was discovered in the year 1983) and a second name, which is actually a number (3551). This asteroid doesn't have a "real" name yet.

