

Moon Shapes

Why does the moon seem to change its shape?

The moon is our closest neighbor in space. We often see it in the night sky. Sometimes the moon looks big and round. Other times it looks like the tip of your fingernail. Does the moon actually change its shape?

The moon is round like a ball. It **orbits** (travels around) the Earth. The sun shines on the moon, just like it shines on the Earth. As the moon moves around the Earth, we see a different part of the moon's sunlit surface. When the moon's lit-up side faces away from us, we call it the **new moon**. When its whole lit-up side faces us, we call it the **full moon**.

The different shapes of the moon are called **phases**.
What phase is the moon tonight?

