

# Track the Moon

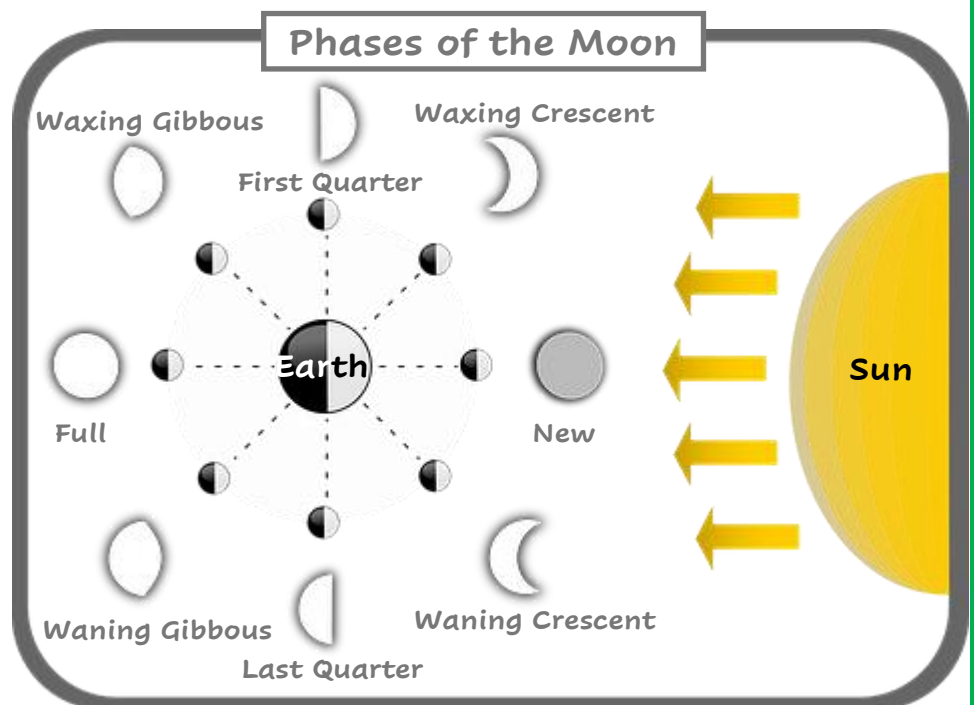
5 and up

In the night sky, the moon is often the first celestial object we can name. Children are naturally curious about the night sky, and the moon, in particular. They notice it is always a different shape and in a different place in the sky. They wonder why are there nights when they cannot see the moon and sometimes they can see the moon during the day. Tracking the moon's progress using a simple moon journal makes a great project and an opportunity to learn more about the moon. Have your children observe the moon each night. Keep track of the phases, or changes, that occur with sketches and notes. It takes 29.5 days for the moon to through all the phases to make a complete cycle. It will take 29.5 days to complete your journal.

The moon doesn't give off light like the sun. When the moon shines, it is reflecting sunlight. Half of the moon is always lit up by the sun, except during an eclipse. As the moon moves around the Earth, we see only a portion of the lit-up side. We call the changing portions phases. When we see 100% of the lit-up side, this is the full moon phase. When we can't see any of the lit-up side, it is the new moon phase.

Let's begin with a new moon, the moon is between us and the sun. See the picture.

We cannot see the lit-up side from earth. As the moon circles the earth, we can see more and more of the lit-up side, which is called waxing. When the moon is on the opposite side of the Earth from the sun, we see a full moon. As the moon continues to orbit the Earth, we see less and less of the lit-up side, which is called waning. As the moon circles the Earth, the phases change.



Find out what a Blue Moon means. Discover the different names for each full moon throughout the year. Write a story about how your favorite moon may have earned its name.



**How to make a simple, pocket-sized Moon Journal.**

- \* Cut the page in half along the solid line.
- \* Put the top half on top of the bottom half, and fold along the dotted line to form a booklet.
- \* Add enough pages for 29 nights.
- \* Punch two holes on the fold using a hole punch.
- \* Bind the pages together with round-head brass fasteners or ribbon. Add more pages as needed.

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# Moon Journal

By \_\_\_\_\_