

Phases of the Moon

Why the Moon seems to change shape · Hunter's Moon edition



Name: _____

Date: _____

The Moon does not make its own light. We see it because **sunlight reflects** off its surface. Half of the Moon is always lit by the Sun, but as the Moon travels around Earth, we see different amounts of that sunlit half. These changing shapes are called **phases**.

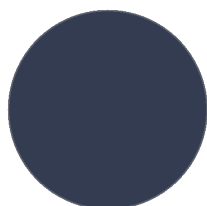
Key ideas

Waxing means the lit part we see is growing. **Waning** means it is shrinking.

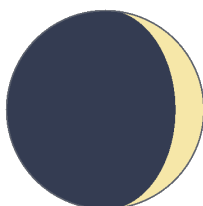
One full cycle, from new moon to new moon, takes about **29.5 days** — about a month.

From the Northern Hemisphere, a waxing moon is lit on the **right** side and a waning moon on the **left**.

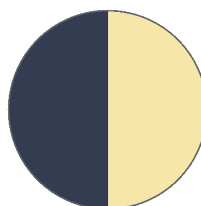
The 8 phases, in order



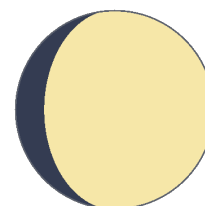
New Moon
about day 0



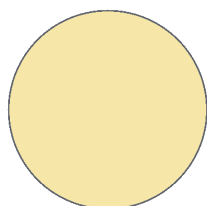
Waxing Crescent
about day 4



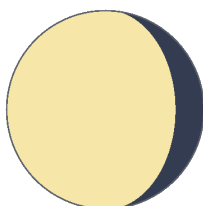
First Quarter
about day 7



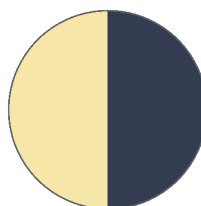
Waxing Gibbous
about day 11



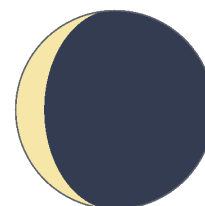
Full Moon
about day 15



Waning Gibbous
about day 18



Third Quarter
about day 22



Waning Crescent
about day 26

Read across, then continue on the next row → back to New Moon

Safari Challenge

On **October 26, 2026** the Moon is full. October's full moon is often called the **Hunter's Moon**. Using about 29.5 days per cycle, about when will the **next** full moon be?



Phases of the Moon · Show What You Know

Why the Moon seems to change shape · Hunter's Moon edition

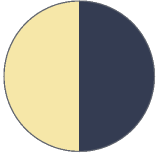
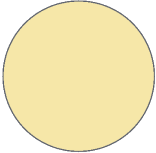
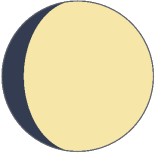
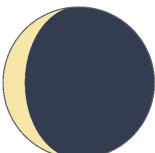
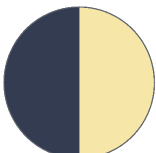
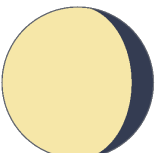
5th Grade Science



Name: _____

Date: _____

Part A · Name each phase.

A		B		C		D	
E		F		G		H	

Part B · Answer the questions.

1. Why does the Moon seem to change shape during the month?

2. About how many days does it take to go from one full moon to the next?

3. Tonight the lit part of the Moon is getting bigger each night. Is it waxing or waning?

4. Tonight is a first quarter moon. About one week later, what phase will you see?

5. True or false: The Moon makes its own light. Explain.



Answer Key · Phases of the Moon

For the grown-up

5th Grade Science



Page 1 Safari Challenge: about 29.5 days after October 26 → around **November 24, 2026**
(accept about Nov 24–25).

Part A: A = Waxing Crescent · B = Third Quarter · C = Full Moon · D = Waxing Gibbous · E = Waning Crescent · F = First Quarter · G = New Moon · H = Waning Gibbous

1. Half of the Moon is always lit by the Sun. As the Moon orbits Earth, we see different amounts of that sunlit half.
2. About 29.5 days (accept 29 or 30).
3. Waxing.
4. A full moon.
5. False. The Moon reflects light from the Sun.



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5th Grade Science



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