

Name _____

Comets: Mysterious Wanderers of the Night Sky

Short Answer Key

1. The coma makes a comet visible from Earth by reflecting sunlight and creating a bright, fuzzy cloud around the nucleus.
2. A comet can have a dust tail, made up of tiny dust particles, and an ion tail, composed of charged gas molecules.
3. Comets change their orbits and enter the inner solar system when their paths are influenced by the gravitational pull of nearby planets or stars.
4. Scientists can learn about the conditions and materials present during the formation of the early solar system by studying comets.
5. Comets appear as "wandering" objects in the night sky because their orbits can take them from the distant reaches of the solar system to closer regions where they become visible.

