

Name _____

The Moon's Pockmarked Past: Why Does Our Moon Have Craters?

Short Answer Key

1. The Moon lacks an atmosphere and a protective magnetic field, leaving it exposed to cosmic collisions, making it more vulnerable than Earth.
2. Lunar craters typically form when asteroids or meteoroids collide with the Moon's surface, creating an explosion upon impact. This explosion excavates material and leaves behind a crater, often referred to as an "impact feature."
3. The size of lunar craters is determined by the size and velocity of the impacting object. One example of a large lunar crater is the South Pole-Aitken Basin.
4. Scientists use lunar craters to estimate the ages of different lunar regions by counting and studying craters of various sizes, as older regions tend to have more craters.
5. Astronauts exploring lunar craters would need to take precautions such as wearing protective suits, helmets, and communicating with mission control to ensure safety.

