

## 8.5: Impacts and Cratering

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### Impacts and Cratering

A crater is a bowl-shaped depression; the word *crater* comes from the Greek for bowl. Craters can form in a number of ways: at the top or side of a volcano, the top of a geyser, from a large impacting meteorite, or even a bomb. For this lab, we will focus on meteorite craters.

Craters are found on every solid Solar System body. If one examines the Moon, many craters are easily visible, even with binoculars. The Moon has no atmosphere, so there is nothing to burn up or slow down the meteoroid, asteroid, or comet.

Crater sizes can go from microscopic to well over one hundred miles across! On the Moon, and other bodies, we observe craters within craters. Occasionally, material is splashed out during an impact, forming what is called rays.



1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Moon. The Moon is littered by thousands of impact craters, easily visible through small telescopes. [” [1stQuarterMoon](#)” by [Dave Young](#) , Flickr Commons is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#) ]

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