

9.9: Meteoroids, Meteors, and Meteorites

Three terms that are often mistakenly used interchangeably are meteoroids, meteors, and meteorites. **Meteoroids** are materials orbiting in space and are smaller than asteroids.

Meteors are the streaks we see in the sky, commonly called *shooting* or *falling stars* ; also can be **fireballs** and/or **bolides**. Most **meteor showers** are comet “dust” left behind as a comet orbits the sun that Earth runs into this trail of dust as we orbit the sun.

Meteorites are materials that makes it to the surface of a planet, satellite, etc.

“I would more easily believe that (a) Yankee professor would lie than that stones would fall from heaven. ”

—Thomas Jefferson (1808)

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