



Name: _____

Our Place in the Milky Way

The Milky Way is the galaxy we call home. It's a massive collection of stars, planets, gas, and dust, all held together by gravity. The Milky Way is so big that it would take light 100,000 years to travel across it! Let's explore where we are in this amazing galaxy.

What Is the Milky Way?

The Milky Way is a spiral galaxy. It has a bright center and long arms that spiral outward like a pinwheel. These arms are filled with stars, gas, and dust. Our solar system is located in one of these spiral arms called the Orion Arm, about halfway between the center of the galaxy and its outer edge.

Where Is Earth?

Earth is part of the solar system, which includes the Sun, eight planets, moons, asteroids, and comets. The Sun is one of about 100 billion stars in the Milky Way! Our solar system orbits around the center of the galaxy, where a supermassive black hole called Sagittarius A* is located. It takes about 250 million years for our solar system to complete one orbit around the galaxy.

What Does the Milky Way Look Like?

When you look up at the night sky, you can sometimes see a faint, cloudy band of light stretching across the sky. This is the Milky Way! The light comes from billions of stars that are far away. We can't see the whole Milky Way because we're inside it, but telescopes give us a better view of its structure.

Why Is the Milky Way Important?

The Milky Way is where we live, and it's full of stars, planets, and even other solar systems. Scientists study the Milky Way to learn more about how stars and planets form, how galaxies change over time, and what might exist beyond our galaxy.

1. Where in the Milky Way is our solar system? _____

For more resources for The Milky Way, visit: