

## Ten Facts About Meteors

1. A meteor shower occurs when the Earth passes through the trail of debris left by a comet or asteroid.
2. Meteors are bits of rocks and ice ejected from comets as they move in their orbits about the sun.
3. A meteor that reaches the ground it is called a meteorite.
4. Meteor showers get their names from the constellation in where their radiant is located. Perseids come from Perseus, hence the name Perseids.
5. Comets continuously eject material with each passage around the sun; this replenishes the shower meteoroids.
6. Approximately 30 meteor showers occur each year that are visible to observers on Earth. Some of these showers have been around longer than 100 years. For example, the Perseid meteor shower, which occurs each year in August, was first observed about 2000 years ago and recorded in the Chinese annals.
7. Meteors are sometimes observed with red, yellow or green trails. The colors are caused by the ionization of molecules - like oxygen which appears to be green.
8. A fireball is a meteor that is brighter than the planet Venus.
9. Radar indicates there are 12,000 meteors on a given night that are about the size of a piece of dust.
10. The International Space Station has shielding to protect it from meteors up to an inch wide.