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Activities

Crash Landing on a Comet

Name: _____ Date: _____

In 2005, NASA celebrated the Fourth of July with the crash landing of the Deep Impact on a comet. The crash gave astronomers a treasure chest of new information about comets. You'll find out more in this Planet Diary activity.

Directions

- Start at Cosmic Car Crash to learn more about the spacecraft's crash landing on the comet. Answer Workspace question 1.
- Visit NASA's Space Place to find out What's in the heart of a comet? Read the description and look at the diagram of comet tails. Then answer questions 2 and 3.
- Continue down the page for details of Deep Impact's adventure. Click the arrow on the picture for an animation. What did scientists learn from the explosion on the comet? Read *What we now know about Comet Tempel 1*, then answer questions 4 and 5.
- Read below the text box to learn about the comet's coma. Look closely at the pictures of the coma before and after impact. Answer the last question.

Workspace

1. Describe the "cosmic car crash" of Deep Impact's impactor on Comet Tempel 1.

2. What happens to a comet's nucleus as it nears the Sun?

3. Describe a comet's coma.

4. Describe the nucleus of Comet Tempel 1.

5. What is the black "goo" on the surface?

6. How did the comet's coma change from the impact?

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