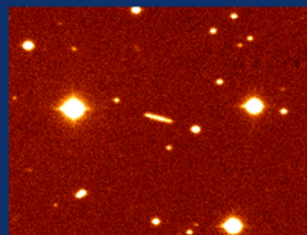


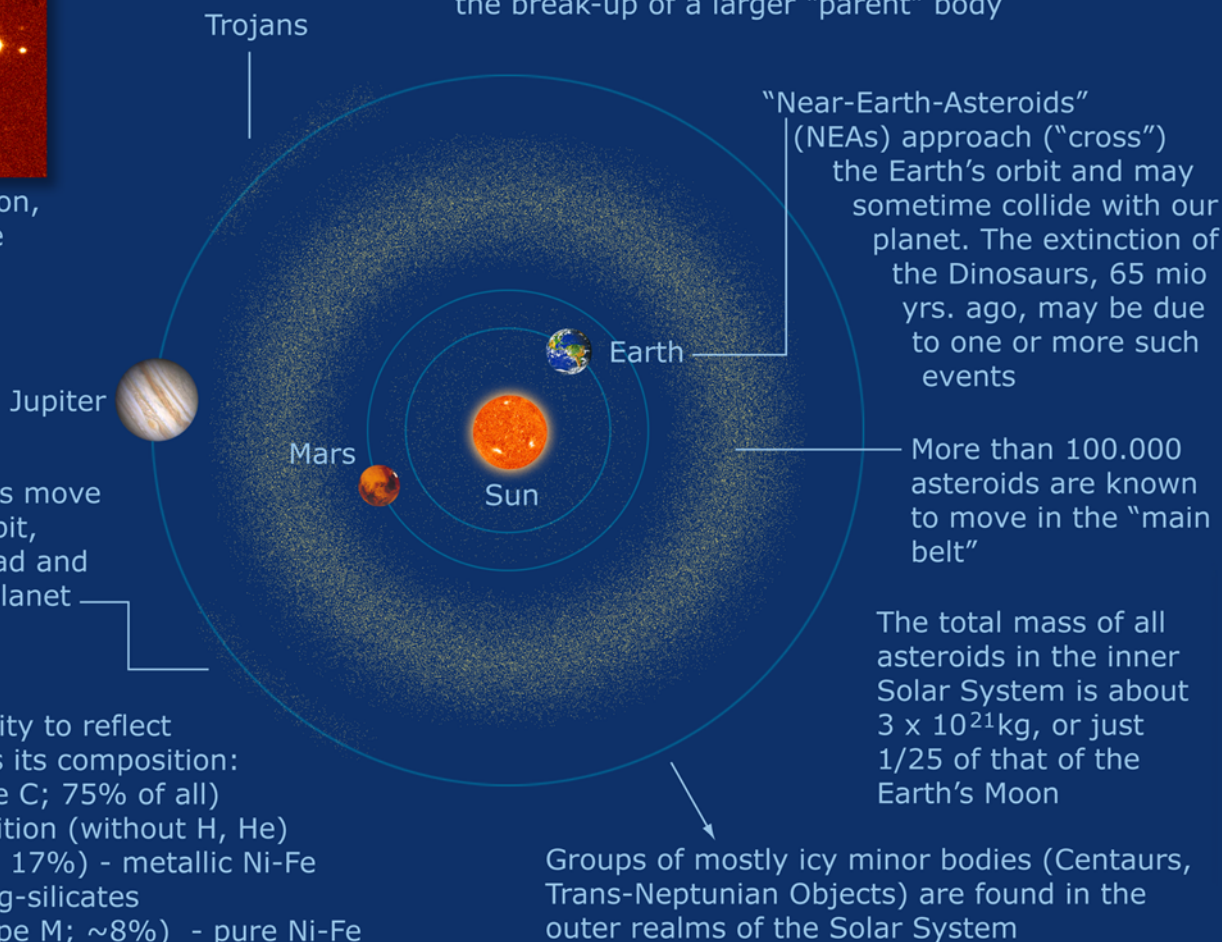
Asteroids

Asteroids – also known as “minor planets” – are small rocky bodies that orbit the Sun along with the major planets. The first asteroid, Ceres, was found in 1801 and, as most of the others, moves in the “main belt” between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. With ~950 km diameter, it is also the largest asteroid known there.



Due to their motion, asteroids produce “trails” on long-exposure photos

Many asteroids move in similar orbits and belong to “families”. Each family probably represents the break-up of a larger “parent” body



Asteroid Ceres
(ground-based photo)



Asteroid Gaspra
(NASA Galileo 1991)



Asteroid Ida with moon
Dactyl (Galileo 1993)



Asteroid Eros
(NASA NEAR 1999)

Physical Data

Property	
Distance from the Sun	
Rotation period	
Dimensions	
Mass	
Density	

Ceres	
Distance from the Sun	414 mio km
Rotation period	9.074 hrs
Dimensions	960 x 933 km
Mass	9.4×10^{20} kg
Density	2050 kg/m ³

For comparison

Gaspra	
Distance from the Sun	332 mio km
Rotation period	3.29 years
Dimensions	19 x 12 x 11 km
Mass	?
Density	?

Deimos	
Distance from the Sun	-
Rotation period	1.26 days
Dimensions	15 x 12 x 11 km
Mass	1.8×10^{15} kg
Density	1700 kg/m ³