

GALAXIES

WHAT IS A GALAXY?

Galaxies are collections of stars, gas, dust, and dark matter held together by gravity.

HOW ARE GALXIES FORMED?

Galaxies are thought to begin as clouds of star and dust swirling traveling through space. As another cloud gets close, gravity collides the two together to create a galaxy.

HOW MANY TYPES OF GALAXIES?

There are 3 main categories of galaxies: Elliptical, Spiral, and Irregular.

ELLIPTICAL

Elliptical galaxies are shaped as their name suggests.

Elliptical galaxies contain many older stars, up to one trillion, but little dust and other interstellar matter.

Their stars orbit the galactic center, like those in the disks of spiral galaxies, but they do so in more random directions.

Few new stars are known to form in elliptical galaxies.

SPIRAL

Spiral galaxies, such as the Milky Way, consist of a flat disk with a bulging center and surrounding spiral arms. The galaxy's disk includes stars, planets, dust, and gas—all of which rotate around the galactic center in a regular manner.

This spinning motion, at speeds of hundreds of kilometers per second, may cause matter in the disk to take on a distinctive spiral shape like a cosmic pinwheel. Some spiral galaxies obtain even more interesting shapes that earn them descriptive names, such as sombrero galaxies.

IRREGULAR

Galaxies that are not spiral or elliptical are called irregular galaxies. Irregular galaxies appear mishapen and lack a distinct form, often because they are within the gravitational influence of other galaxies close by.

