

Comet Streamer



Comets are frozen, rocky objects that usually dwell far away in the outer Solar System. But every now and then, one will come close enough to Earth to be observed. As a comet approaches the Sun, its icy surface begins to melt, leaving beautiful plumes of water vapor behind. You can recreate that beauty by making your very own comet streamer!

Materials

Stick (chopstick, pencil, popsicle stick, or similar)
Aluminum foil
Ribbons or streamers (2 colors)
Scissors

Directions

1. The plumes a comet creates when it approaches the Sun are called tails. Most comets have two tails, one made of gas, and one made of dust. Use your two colors of ribbons to represent the two tails.
 - a. **Cut** 3 long pieces of your brightest color ribbon. These will be the comet's dust tail, which is larger and brighter than the gas tail.
 - b. **Cut** 2 medium pieces of the other ribbon. These will make up the comet's gas tail, which is smaller and harder to see.
 - c. **Tie** one end of each ribbon tightly to the end of your stick.



Image source: NASA



2. The icy, rocky center of the comet is called a nucleus. This is often surrounded by a bright glow called a coma. Use the aluminum foil to create the glowing nucleus.

- a. **Cut out** three square-shaped pieces of aluminum foil.
- b. **Hold** the comet tails off to the side, and **wrap** each piece of foil around the end of the stick, scrunching it up into a tight ball. Be careful to keep the tails outside of the ball!



3. Now you have a comet on a stick! Make sure everything is secure, and take it on a test flight!