

Characteristics of the Sun

The sun is a fiery ball of hot gases and has no hard surfaces. It gives off enormous amounts of light and heat. The outer part of the sun is about 5,500 °C. The inner core could be as hot as 15,000,000 °C.

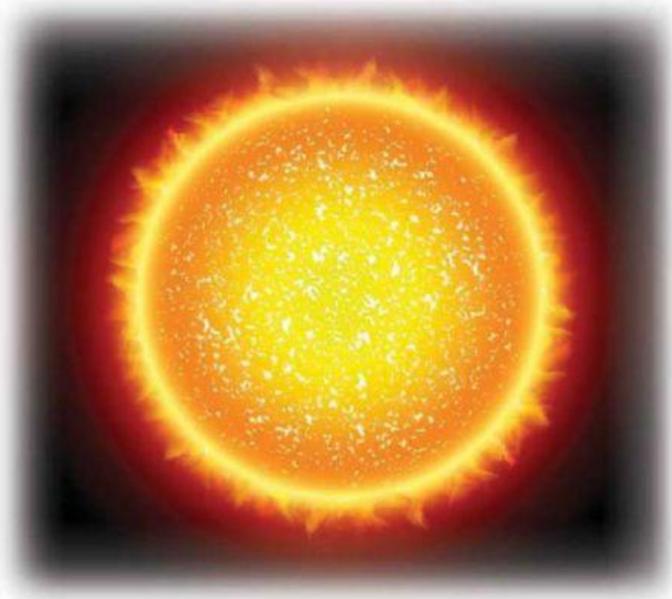
The Sun's Atmosphere

Like Earth, the sun has an atmosphere. The innermost layer is called the **photosphere**. It gives off the light energy you see. The layer above the photosphere is the **chromosphere**. The outermost layer is called the **corona**. When scientists look at the sun with special equipment, they see dark spots, called **sunspots**, moving on the face of the sun. Sunspots are part of the photosphere. They may be the size of Earth or larger. They look dark because they are not as hot as the rest of the photosphere. The number of sunspots increases and decreases in cycles of about eleven years.

Label the parts of the Sun:

corona

photosphere



chromosphere

Flash Lab

Measuring Shadows

Have a partner measure your shadow at different times during the day. Write down what you find. Describe how your shadow changes as the sun moves.