

# The Moon: A Natural Satellite

The **moon** is not a planet, but a natural satellite that circles the earth. The moon reflects light from the sun, like a mirror. As the moon orbits earth, sunlight hits different areas of the moon, making it visible. These changes are called *phases*.

At the **New Moon** phase, the moon is very hard to see because it's between the earth and the sun, and it is not lit up. The moon becomes visible during the **Waxing Crescent** phase, but we can only see a small piece of it. During the **First Quarter** moon, you can see half of the moon. The moon looks like it is almost full in the **Waxing Gibbous** phase. When there's a **Full Moon**, it is fully facing the sun causing it to appear fully lit up. Then, the **Waning Gibbous** phase is when the moon begins shrinking and we can see all but a small sliver. In the **Last Quarter**, you can see half of the moon again. The last phase before a New Moon is the **Waning Crescent** phase, which is when the moon appears as a small crescent shape again.

**Directions:** Label each phase of the moon below using the information from above.

