

Earth's Moon

By Rashida Registe

Have you ever wondered if the moon is really made out of cheese? Or if there really is a man in the moon? For starters, the moon is not made out of cheese. It is made up of oxygen, magnesium, aluminum, silicon and other elements. What else do we know about our moon?

The moon is 384,403 kilometers away from the Earth. It has a **diameter** of 3,476 kilometers. It takes 27 days, 7 hours and 43 minutes to rotate around the Earth. Since the moon's gravity is only 1/6 of the Earth's, if you weigh 180 pounds on Earth then you will be only 30 pounds on the moon! Too many facts to absorb? Then let's look at some history.

It is known that in the 17th century (the 1600s) Galileo and other astronomers used telescopes to make observations of the moon. Many years later, on July 20, 1969 Neil Armstrong set foot on the moon.

Armstrong, and those astronauts on the moon after him, noticed the color of the lunar sky. Unlike Earth, where you look into the daytime sky and see blue, the moon's daytime sky is always black. Our sky appears blue because of the way light is **diffracted** by our atmosphere. (Diffraction is a change in direction and intensity.) Since the moon does not have an atmosphere, the light is not diffracted; so, the sky looks black, as our nighttime sky does.



Earlier, the question, “is there really a man in the moon?” was asked. The answer to that question is actually, no. Many people think that the moon appears to have a face – eyes, nose and mouth. What they are seeing is the uneven surface of the moon. The real deal is that there are dark holes called **craters** as well as hills. These craters and hills cast shadows, and we see a face created by some of those shadows.