**“Space” Essential Vocabulary**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Solar System-** the sun along with the planets, moons and other small celestial bodies that orbit around it. Can also be a similar system around another star.

**Rotation-** the circular movement of an object around its center axis.

**Axis of Rotation-** an imaginary line passing through an object that it rotates around. (Ex. Earth’s axis of rotation passes through the North and South poles.)

**Tilt-** the angle at which an object is positioned compared to it’s center axis. (Ex. the Earth tilts at a 23.5 degree angle.)

**Revolution/Orbit-** a circular path a celestial body (planet, moon, etc.) takes around another. (Ex. The Earth makes one full revolution around the sun each year.)

**Moon Phase-** the shape of the illuminated side of the moon as seen on Earth.

**Solar Eclipse-** occurs when the moon passes between the Earth and the Sun. The sun appears to be fully or partially “blocked” by the moon.

**Lunar Eclipse-** occurs when the Earth passes between the Sun and the moon.

**Solstice-** Occurs during the winter and summer, when the sun reaches the highest (summer) and lowest(winter) points in the sky at noon; causes the longest (summer) and shortest(winter) days of the year.

**Equinox-** Occurs during the spring and fall, when day and night are approximately the same time.

**Tides -** the daily rising and falling of the sea level due to the location of the sun, earth, and moon system (neap, spring, low, high).

**Astronomical Unit (AU) -** the mean distance from the center of the earth to the center of the sun; measurement used to describe distances in space.

**Gravity -** the force that attracts a body towards the center of earth.

**Terrestrial Planets -** smaller, rocky planets with hard surfaces made of rocks and metals.

**Gas Giant/Jovian Planets -** larger planets made out of gases; no solid surfaces.

**Habitable -** suitable or good enough to live in/on.

**Atmosphere -** layer of gases surrounding a planet.

**International Space Station (ISS) -** a large spacecraft in orbit around the earth that houses astronauts and cosmonauts to live and conduct science experiments.

**Spinoff -** a product/technology that develops from another product/technology.

**Probe -** an unmanned exploratory spacecraft that sends information about its environment back to earth.

**Satellite -** a man-made or natural object (like a moon) that orbits earth or another planet.