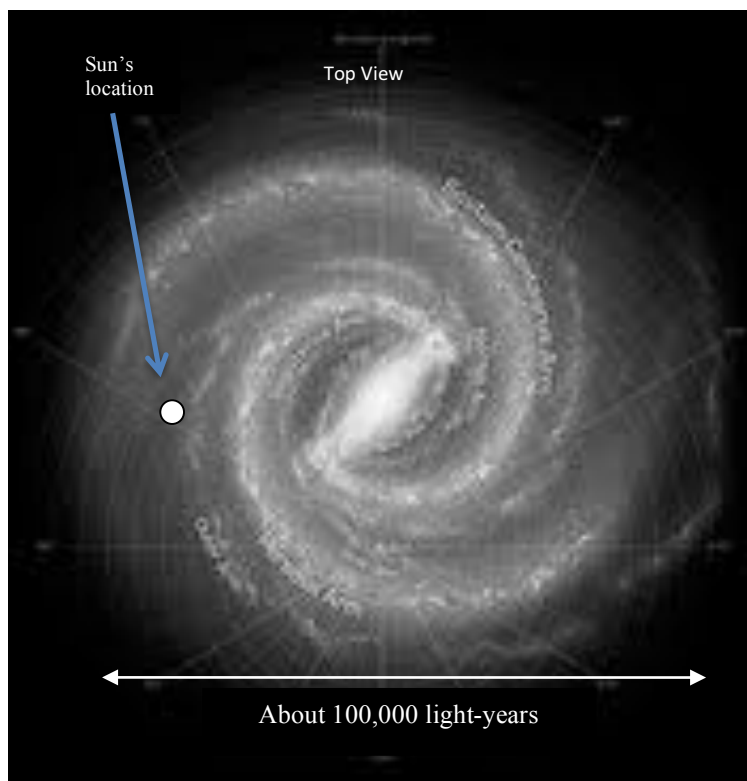


## Literacy Reading of the Milky Way

(Taken from the Utah State Science Teacher Resource Book, 2005, pages 11.1.3 and 11.1.4)

Most stars belong to a *galaxy*. Our solar system lies on the outer edge of a huge galaxy called the *Milky Way Galaxy*. Our solar system is a tiny dot compared to the Milky Way Galaxy. The Milky Way Galaxy is 100,000 light-years from one end to the other. This is about how many years it would take someone to cross the Milky Way traveling at the speed of light. Our solar system is about 0.00125 of a light-year (657 light minutes). You can see how small our solar system is compared to the Milky Way. Most of the celestial bodies you see in the sky are in the Milky Way Galaxy.



**Milky Way Galaxy**

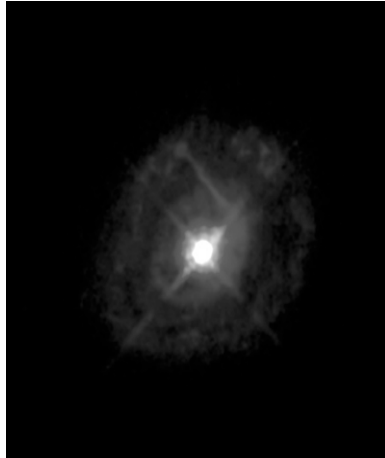
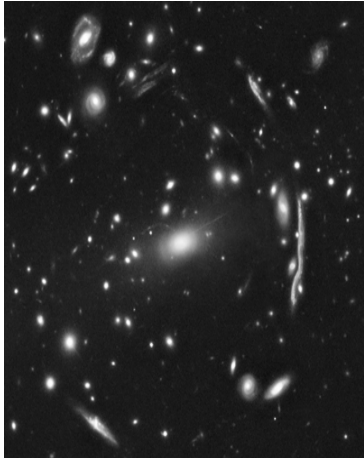
---

**galaxy** – a group of millions of stars held together by gravity

**Milky Way Galaxy** – a group of about 200 billion stars formed in a disk-shaped spiral that contains our solar system

**star** – a celestial object, consisting of gases, which generates light and heat

The Milky Way Galaxy is only one galaxy. There are billions of galaxies that span the universe. One of the Milky Way's neighboring galaxies is Andromeda. It is 2 million light years away. It is so far away that you can't see its individual stars. You can only see a hazy spot in the night sky produced by the combined light of the stars. The pictures below were taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. There are many galaxies within the view of the Hubble Telescope. Even though our world seems big to us, in the universe we are very, very small.



**Other Galaxies**