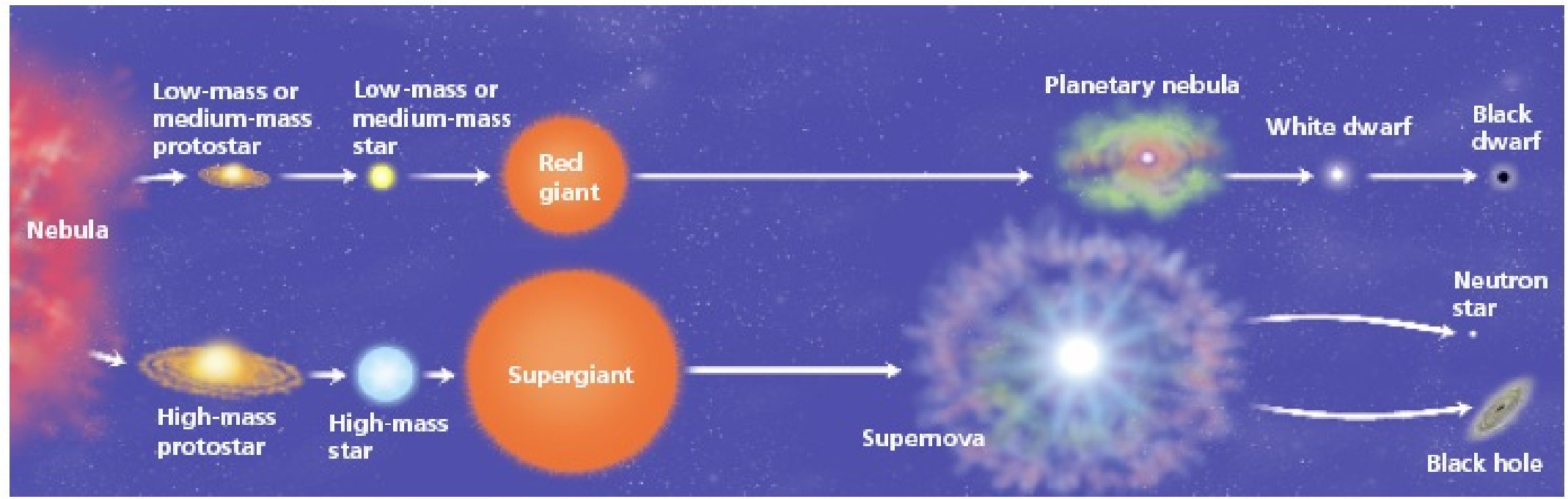
Life Cycle of a Star - Worksheet

# A STAR IS BORN – STAGES COMMON TO ALL STARS

All stars start as a **nebula. A nebula** is a large cloud of gas and dust. Gravity can pull some of the gas and dust in a nebula together. The contracting cloud is then called a **protostar.** A protostar is the earliest stage of a star’s life. **A star is born when the gas and dust from a** **nebula become so hot that nuclear fusion starts.** Once a star has “turned on” it is known as **a main sequence star**. When a main sequence star begins to run out of hydrogen fuel, the star becomes a **red giant** or a **red super giant.**



# THE DEATH OF A LOW OR MEDIUM MASS STAR

After a low or medium mass or star has become a red giant the outer parts grow bigger and drift into space, forming a cloud of gas called a **planetary nebula**. The blue-white hot core of the star that is left behind cools and becomes a **white dwarf.** The white dwarf eventually runs out of fuel and dies as a **black dwarf.**

# THE DEATH OF A HIGH MASS STAR

A dying red super giant star can suddenly explode. The explosion iscalled a **supernova.** After the star explodes, some of the materials from the star are left behind. This material may form a neutron star. **Neutron stars** are the remains of high-mass stars. The most massive stars become **black holes** when they die. After a large mass star explodes, a large amount of mass may remain. The gravity of the mass is so strong that gas is pulled inward, pulling more gas into a smaller and smaller space. Eventually, the gravity becomes so strong that nothing can escape, not even light.

## Question Sheet

Just like living things and humans, stars have a life cycle, which consists of birth, growth, development, middle age, old age, and death. The life cycle of a star spans over billions of years.

## Section One - Sequencing

The stages below are not in the right order. Number the stages in the correct order.

\_\_\_\_\_ The star begins to run out of fuel and expands into a **red giant** or **red super giant**.

\_\_\_\_\_ Stars start out as diffused clouds of gas and dust drifting through space. A single one of these clouds is called a **nebula**

\_\_\_\_\_ What happens next depends on the mass of the star.

\_\_\_\_\_ Heat and pressure build in the core of the **protostar** until **nuclear fusion** takes place.

\_\_\_\_\_ The force of gravity pulls a nebula together forming clumps called **protostars**.

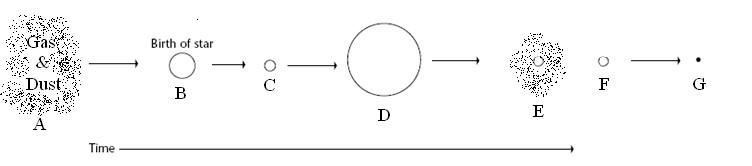
\_\_\_\_\_ Hydrogen atoms are fused together generating an enormous amount of energy igniting the star causing it to shine.

## Section Two - Vocabulary

Match the word on the left with the definition on the right.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **\_\_\_\_ black dwarf** |  | **e.** star left at the core of a planetary nebula |
| **\_\_\_\_ white dwarf** |  | **g.** a red super giant star explodes |
| **\_\_\_\_ nebula** |  | **c.** what a medium-mass star becomes at the end of its life |
| **\_\_\_\_ protostar** |  | **b.** a large cloud of gas or dust in space |
| **\_\_\_\_ supernova** |  | **a.** exerts such a strong gravitational pull that no light escapes |
| **\_\_\_\_ neutron star** |  | **d.** the earliest stage of a star ’s life |
| **\_\_\_\_ black hole** |  | **f.** the remains of a high mass star |

## Section Three – Understanding Main Ideas - Low Mass Star



**\_\_\_\_ 1.** Red giant

**\_\_\_\_ 2.** Protostar

## \_\_\_\_ 3. Nebula

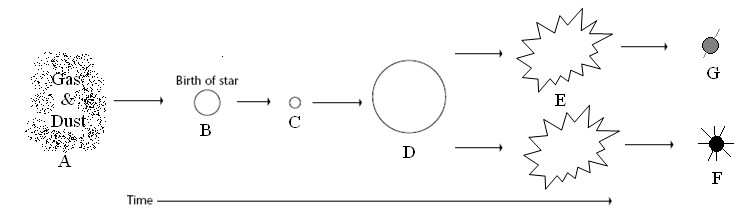
**\_\_\_\_ 4.** Black dwarf

**\_\_\_\_ 5.** The stage the sun is in

\_\_\_\_ **6.** White dwarf

\_\_\_\_ **7**. Planetary Nebula

## Section Four – Understanding Main Ideas - High Mass Star



**\_\_\_\_ 1.** Black Hole

\_\_\_\_ **2**. Supernova

\_\_\_\_ **3**. Protostar

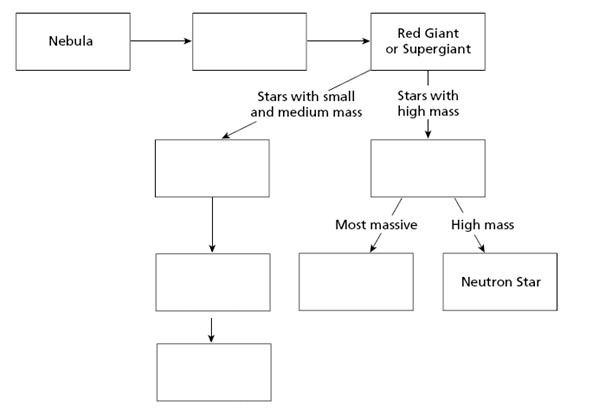
\_\_\_\_ **4**. Gravity causes this to condense into a protostar

\_\_\_\_ **5**. Main sequence star

\_\_\_\_ **6**. When a star begins to run out of fuel and grows larger

\_\_\_\_ **7**. Neutron star

## Section Five – Graphic Organizer – Putting it all Together



## Section Six – Venn Diagram - Compare and Contrast

