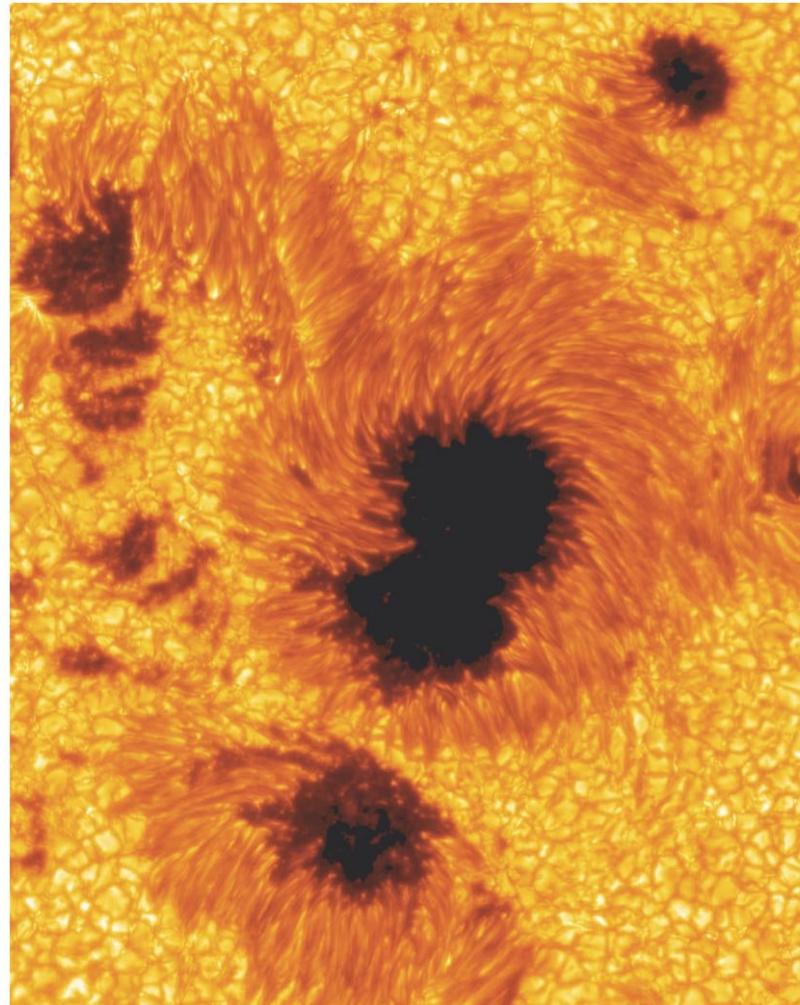


Chapter 16

The Sun



Units of Chapter 16

16.1 Physical Properties of the Sun

16.2 The Solar Interior

SOHO: Eavesdropping on the Sun

16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

16.4 Solar Magnetism

16.5 The Active Sun

Solar-Terrestrial Relations

Units of Chapter 16

16.1 Physical Properties of the Sun

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16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

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16.5 The Active Sun

Solar-Terrestrial Relations

Units of Chapter 16 (cont.)

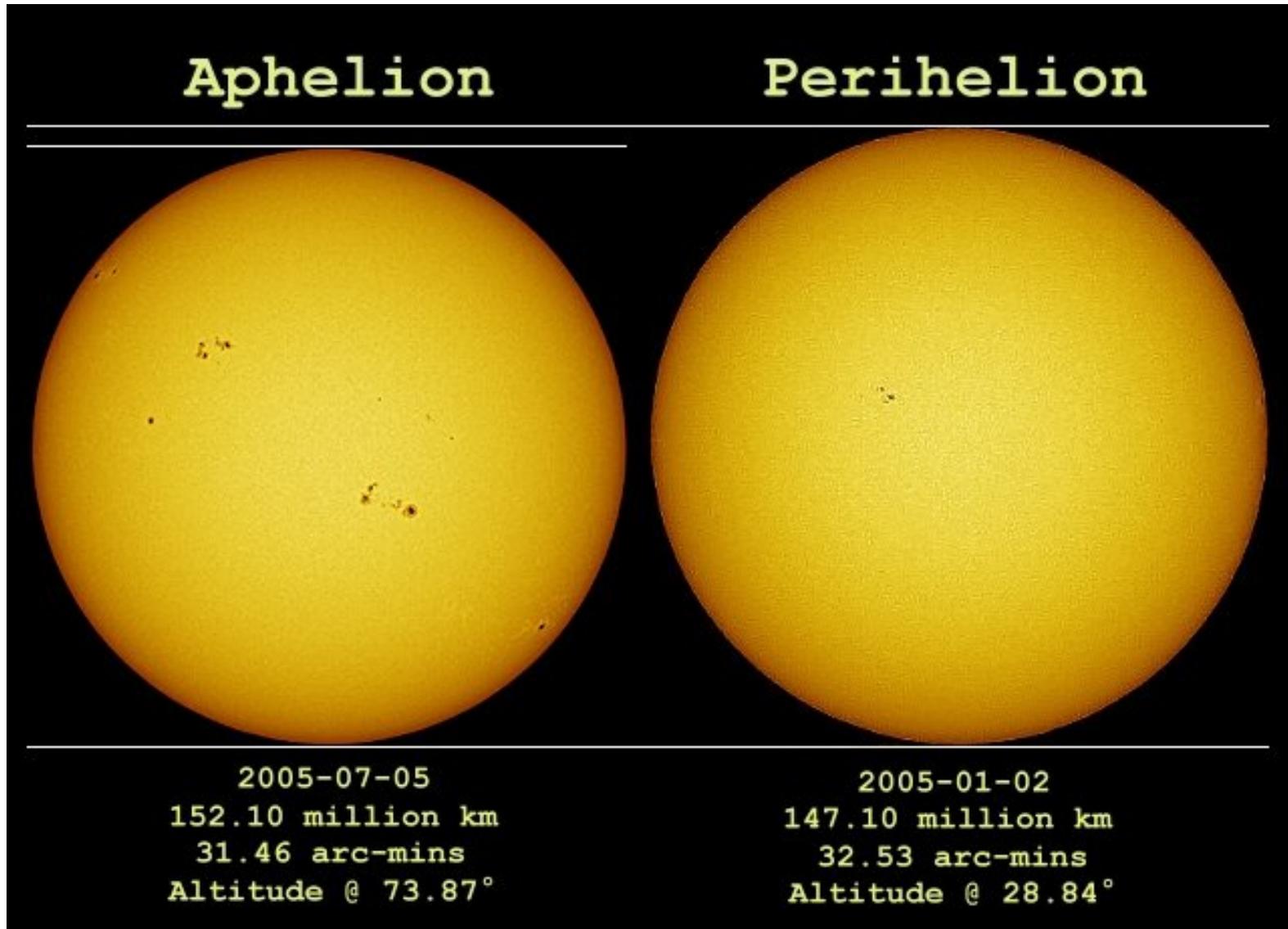
16.6 The Heart of the Sun

Fundamental Forces

Energy Generation in the Proton–Proton Chain

16.7 Observations of Solar Neutrinos

Appearance of Sun



16.1 Physical Properties of the Sun

Radius: 700,000 km

Mass: 2.0×10^{30} kg

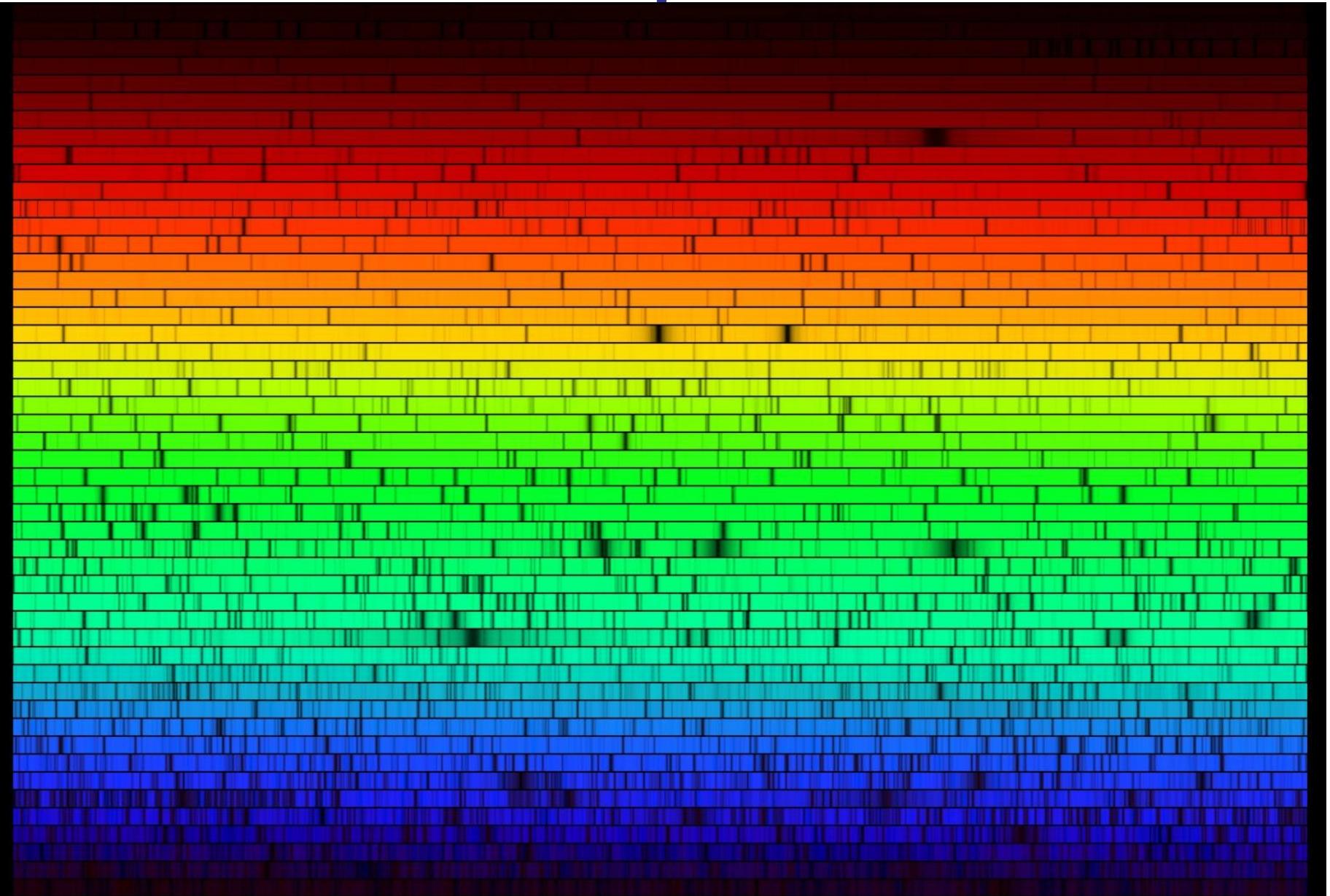
Density: 1400 kg/m³ (average)

Rotation: Differential; period about a month (25-31d)

Surface temperature: 5800 K

Apparent surface of Sun is photosphere

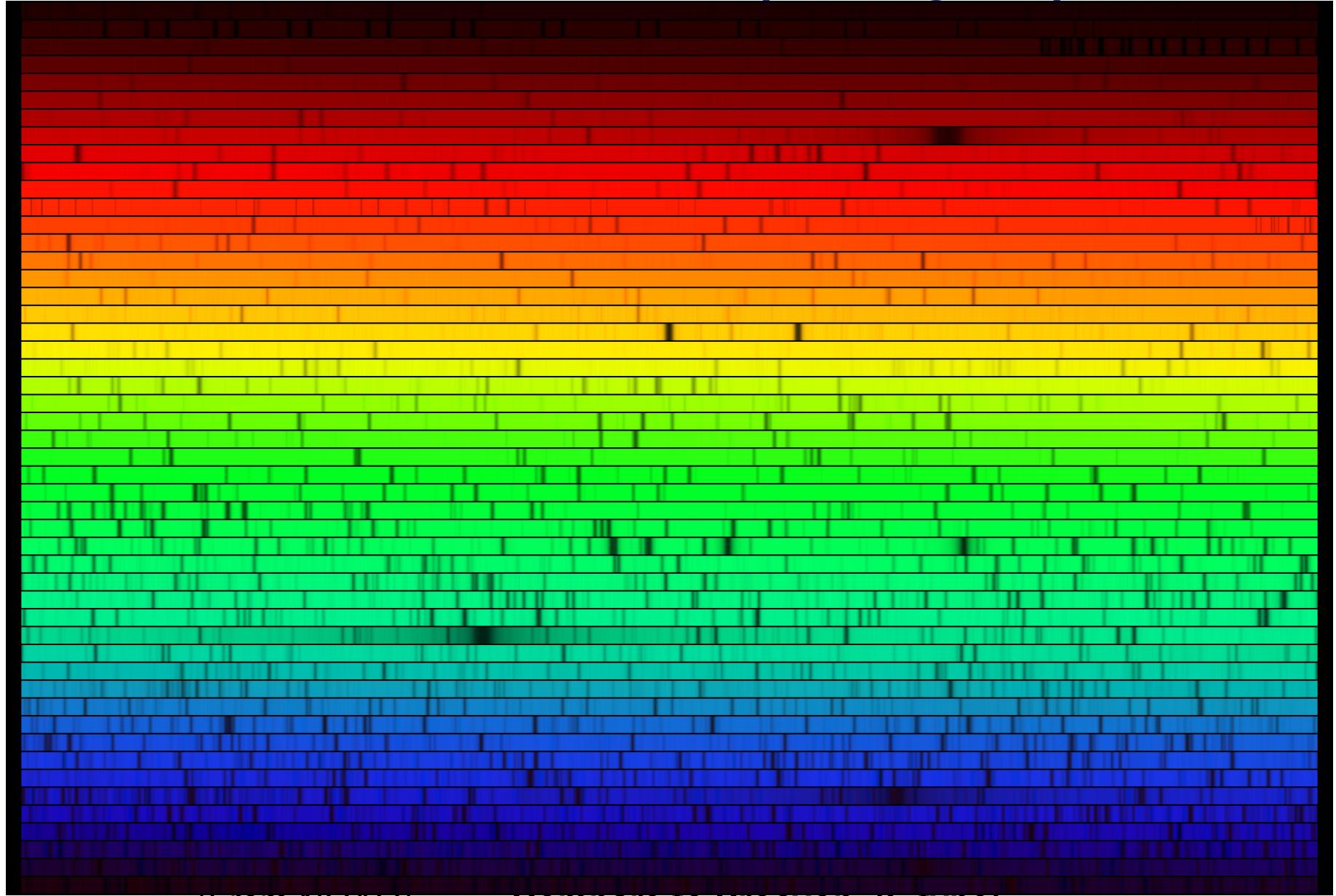
Solar spectrum



(From NOAO)

Compare to Procyon ...

Star spectrum (Procyon)

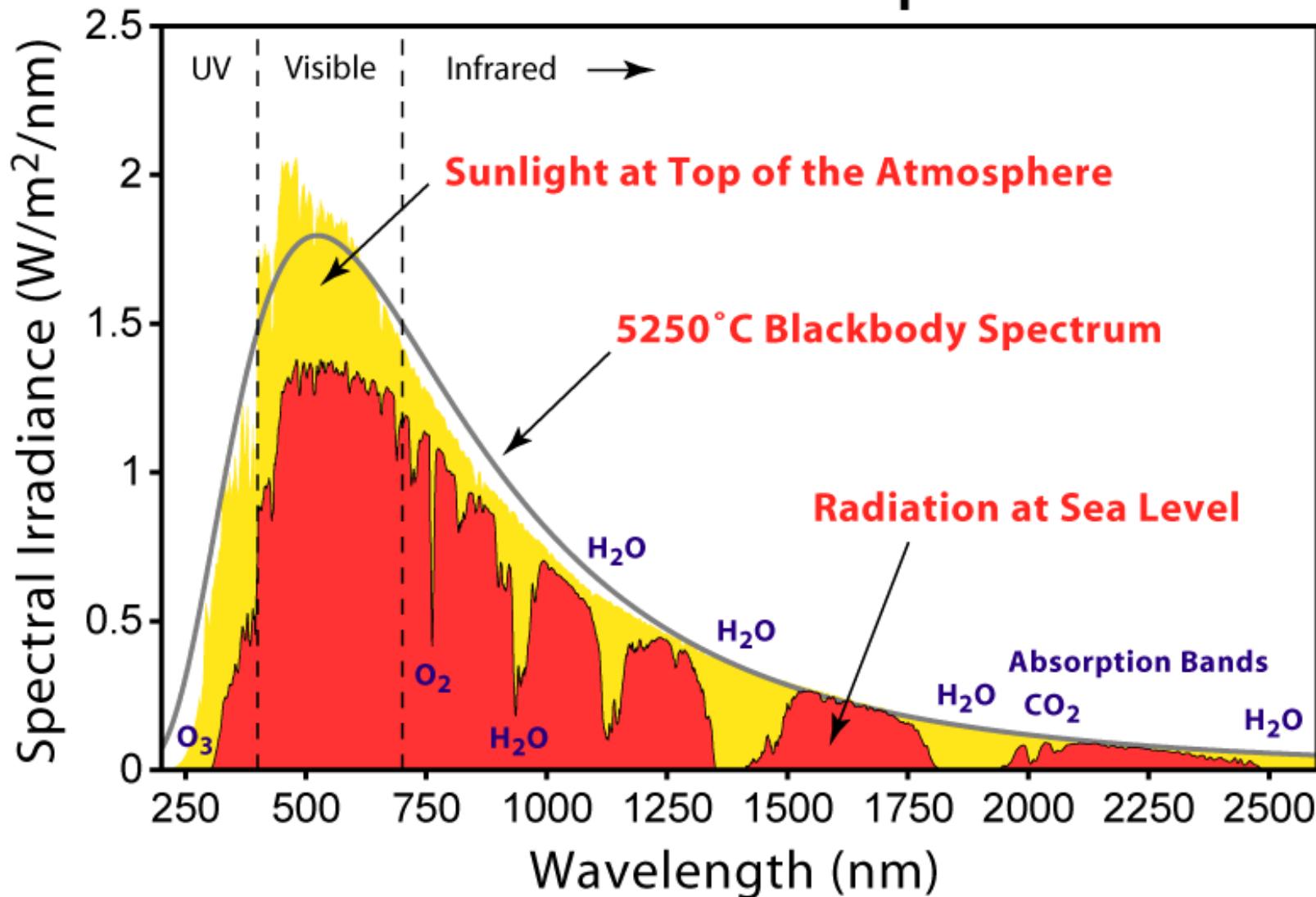


(From NOAO)

Compare to Procyon (F-type)

Solar spectrum

Solar Radiation Spectrum



Q: Can you relate the “radiation at sea level” to Kirchhoff's laws?

16.1 Physical Properties of the Sun

Luminosity—total energy radiated per second in all directions. (You might see L_v or L_B or L_{bol})

Solar constant—amount of Sun's energy passing through a square meter at 1 AU — 1400 W/m^2 . *
(This is not a luminosity but a *flux*.)

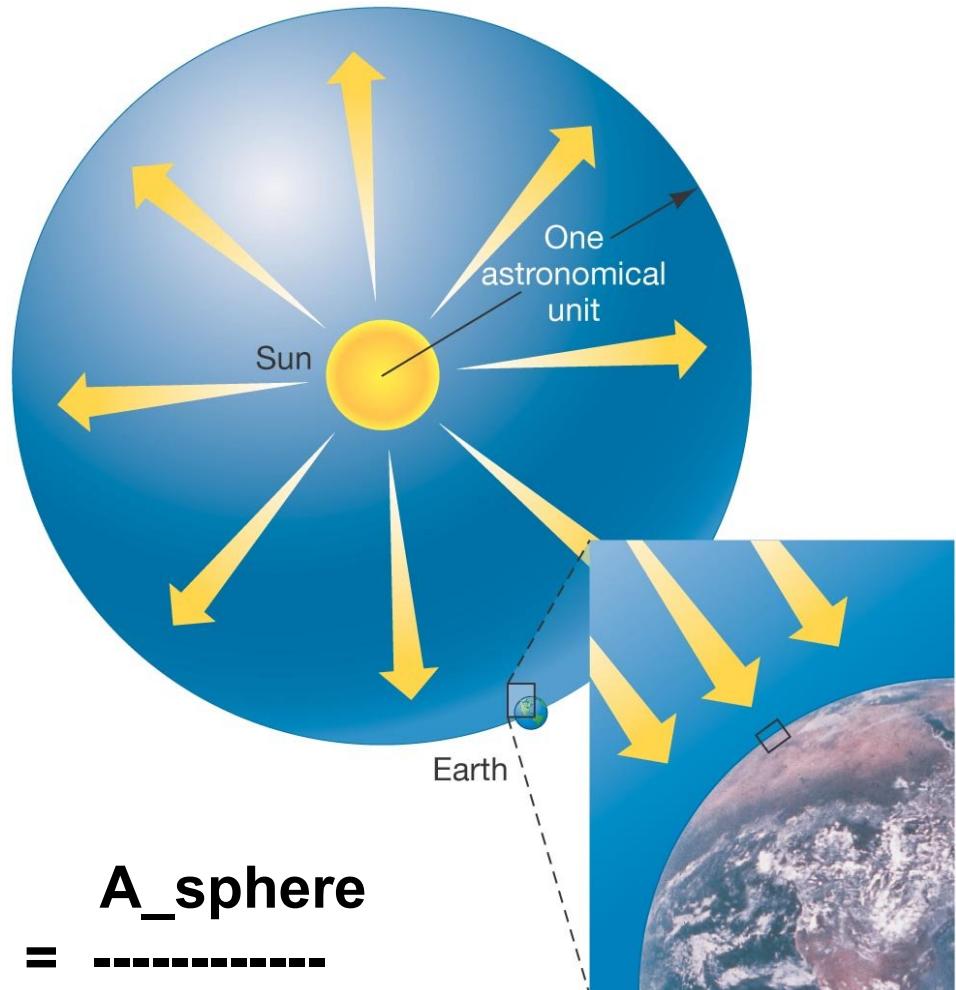
The Sun's luminosity about $1 L_\odot = 4 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ —the equivalent of 10 billion 1-megaton nuclear bombs per second.

How can one measure L ?

*actually 1361 W/m^2

16.1 Physical Properties of the Sun

We can extrapolate from the radiation passing through 1 m² at 1 AU (the Solar Constant) to the radiation passing through a sphere of radius 1 AU (the Solar Luminosity).



$$\frac{\text{Luminosity}}{\text{Sol Const}} = \frac{\text{A}_\text{sphere}}{1 \text{ m}^2}$$

16.2 The Solar Interior

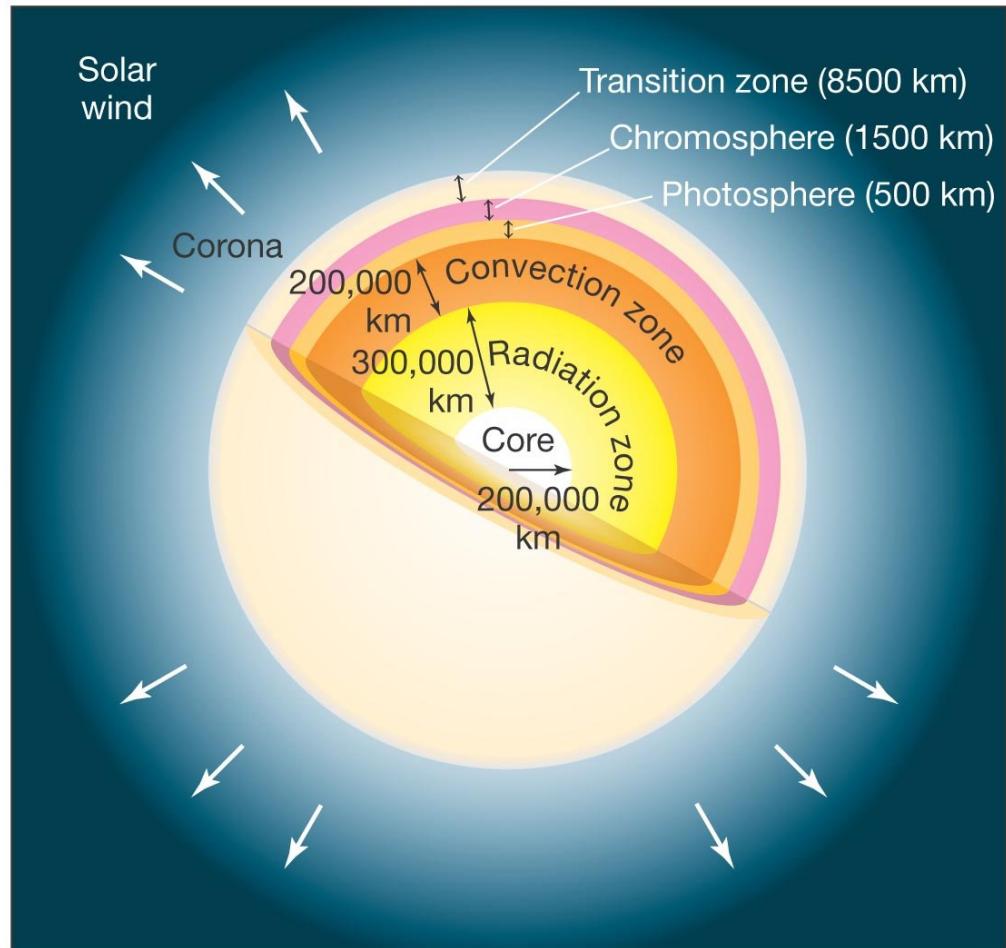
Interior structure of the Sun:

Core: where energy is created (fusion)

Radiative Zone: heat transferred outward by radiation

**Convective Zone
heat transfer by radiation and convection**

(Outer layers are not to scale.)

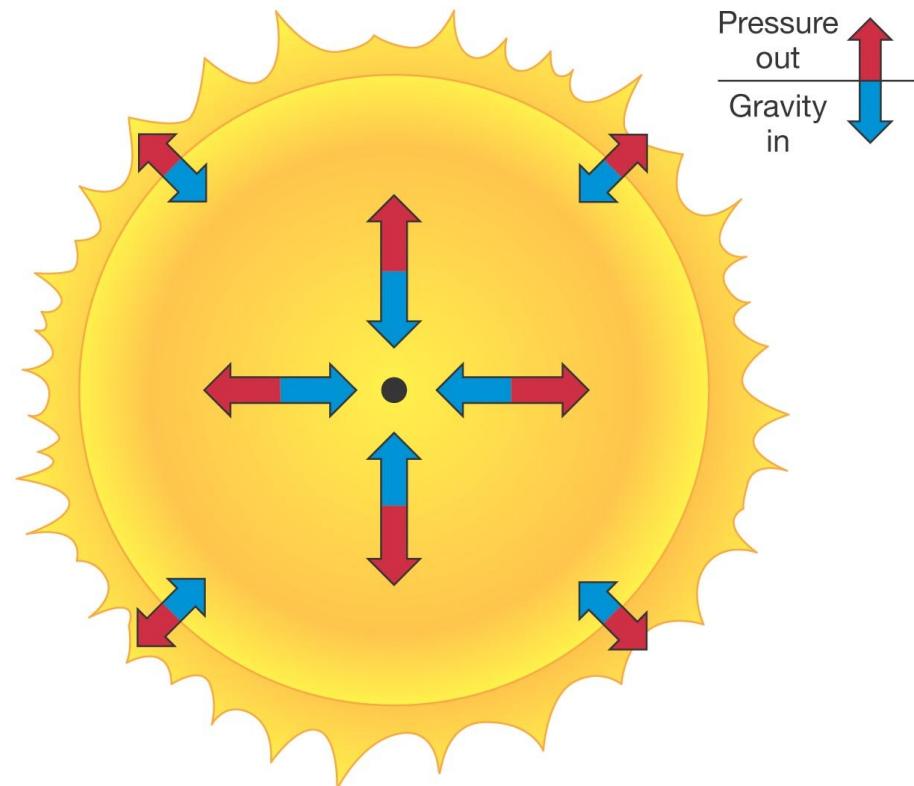


16.2 The Solar Interior

How do we know about the interior?

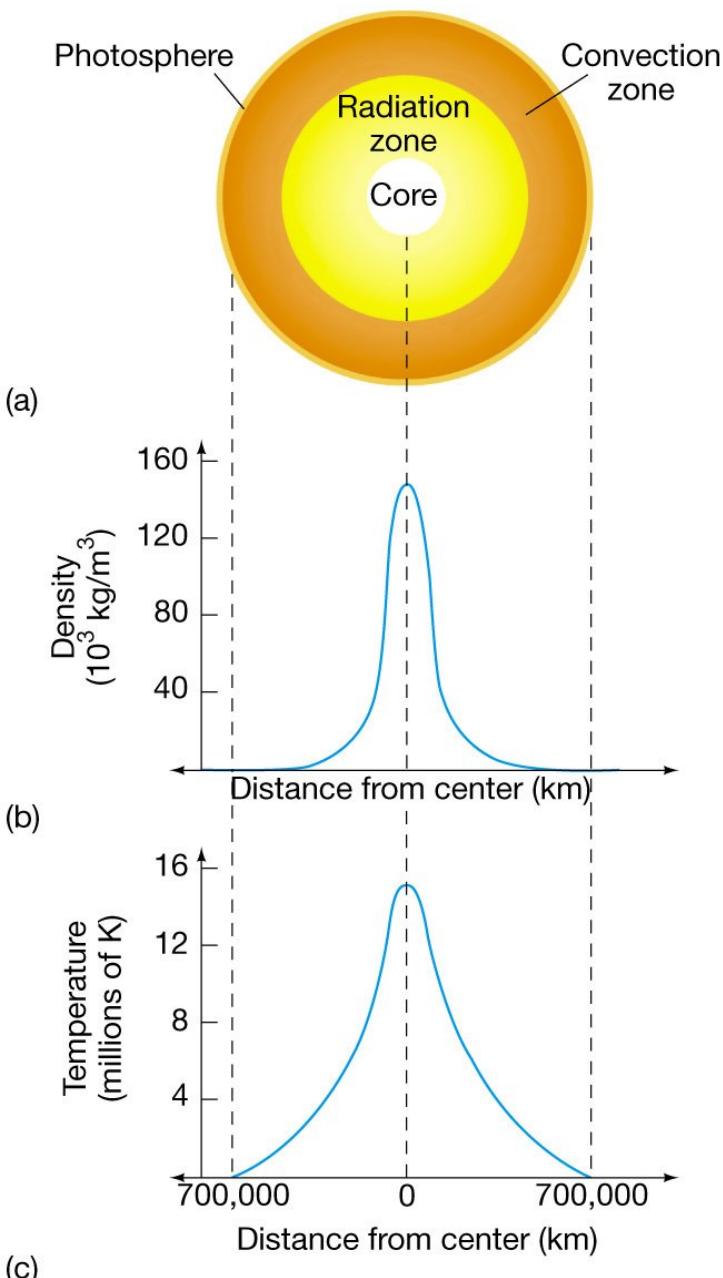
Method 1: Astrophysics uses 4 “structural equations” which help us estimate temp, density, pressure, etc. in the Sun’s interior.

One is called hydrostatic equilibrium: for a stable star, inward gravitational force must be balanced by outward pressure.



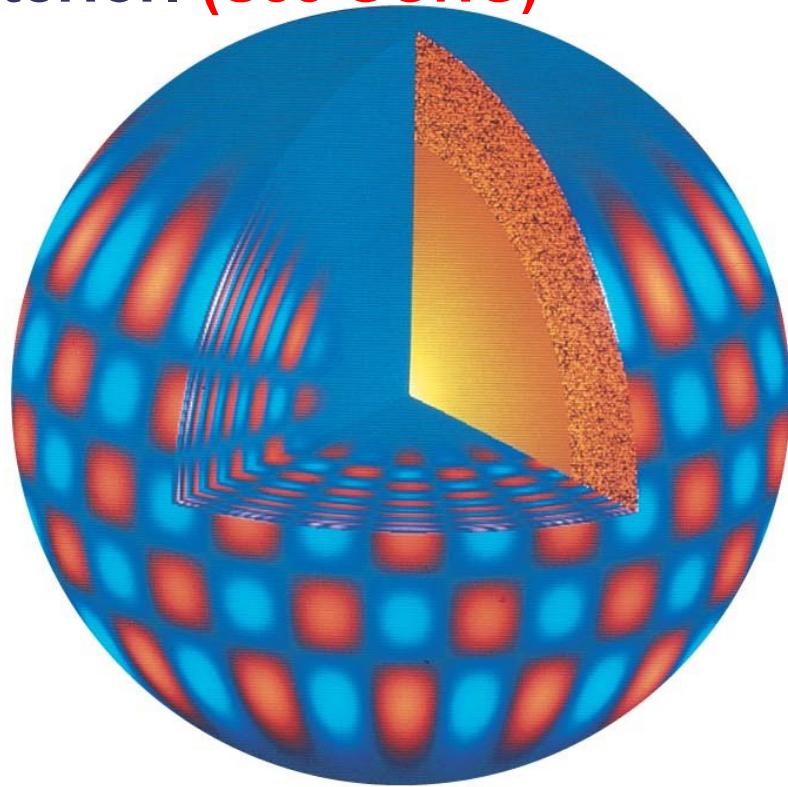
16.2 The Solar Interior

Solar density and temperature, according to the standard solar model:

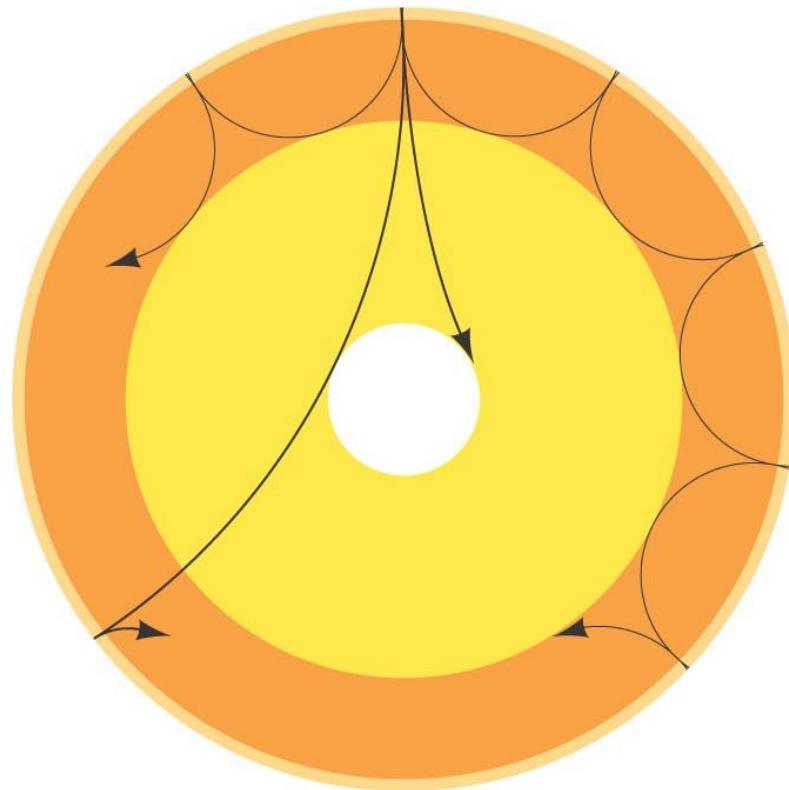


16.2 The Solar Interior

Method 2: Helioseismology, the study of oscillation modes of the Sun, gives additional clues about the interior. (See GONG)



(a)



(b)

Doppler shifts of solar spectral lines indicate a complex pattern of vibrations.

16.2 The Solar Interior

Helioseismology

Different modes of oscillation analogous to waves on a string (harmonics) and on a metal (Chladni) plate. (See YouTube demo)

P-waves (pressure waves) and g-waves (gravity waves)

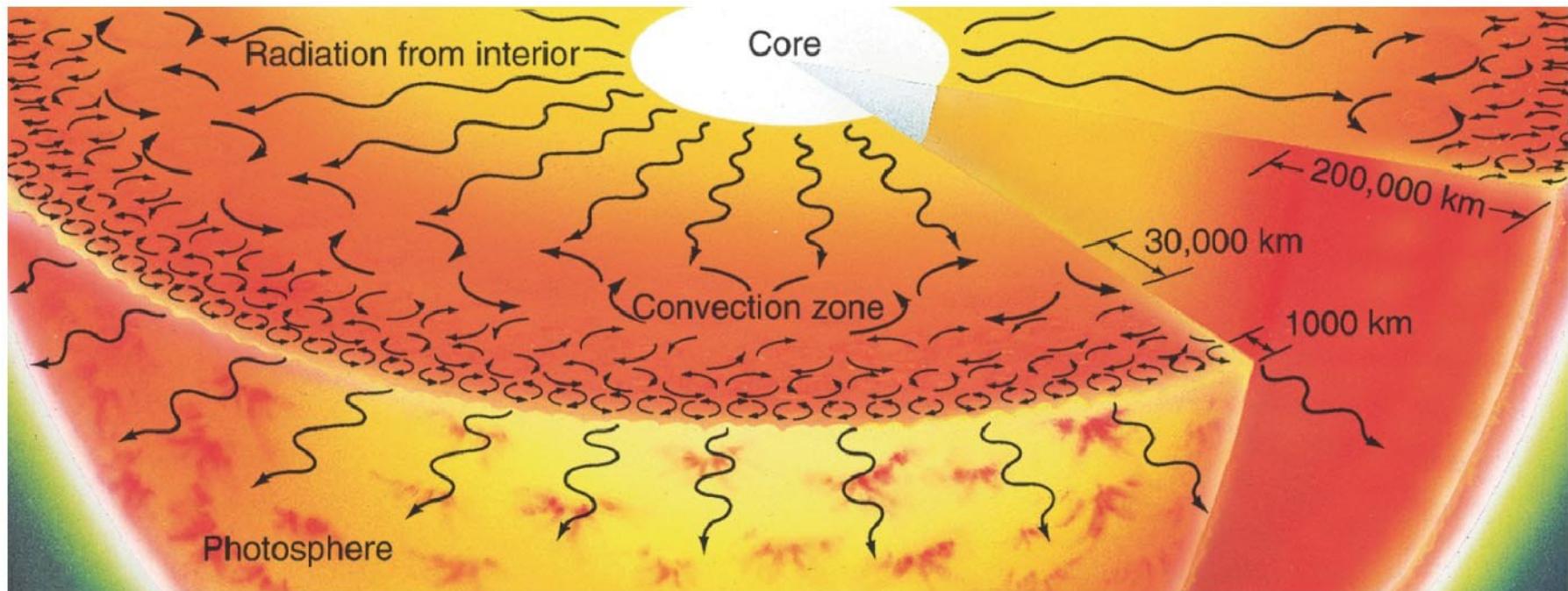
Propagate in curved lines b/c of gradually changing density

Main p-mode oscillation = 3.3 mHz, 5-minute period!

16.2 The Solar Interior

Zones defined by energy transport:

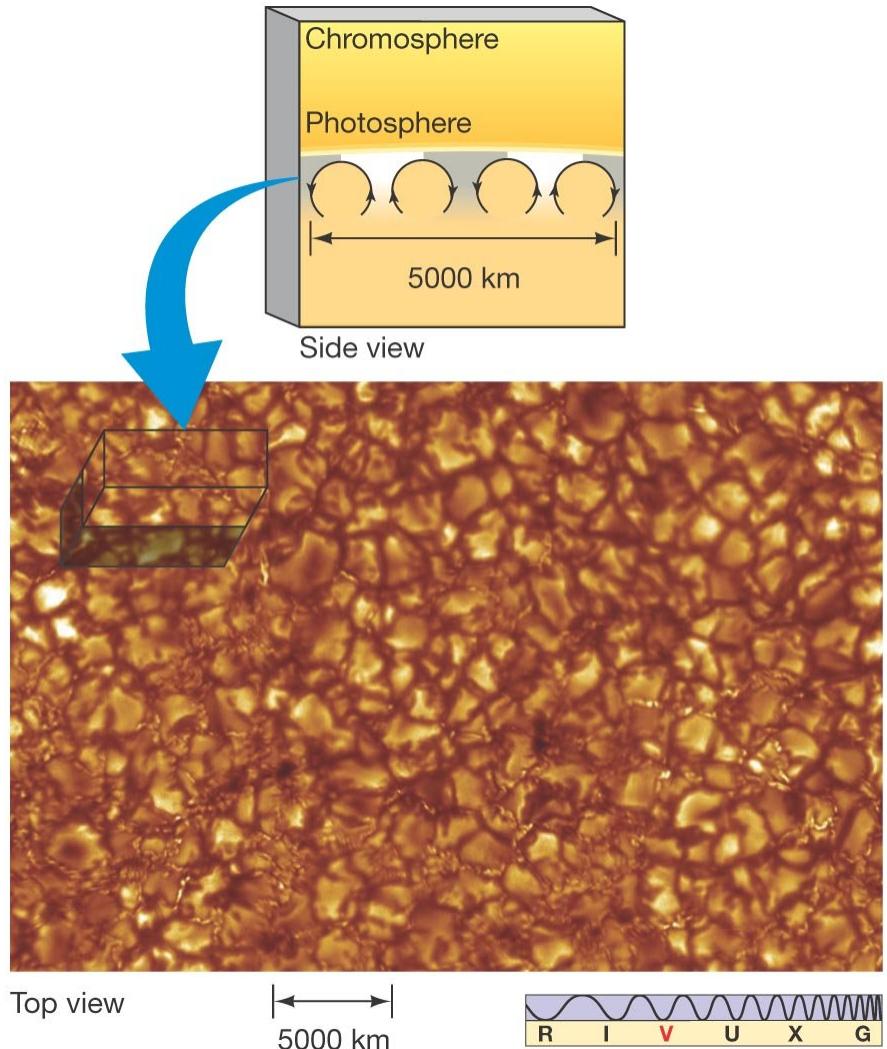
The radiation zone is relatively transparent; the cooler convection zone is opaque



16.2 The Solar Interior

**Signs of convection:
the photosphere
appears granulated.**

**Upwelling gas - hot
sinking gas - cool**

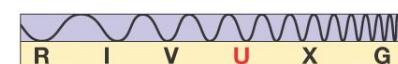
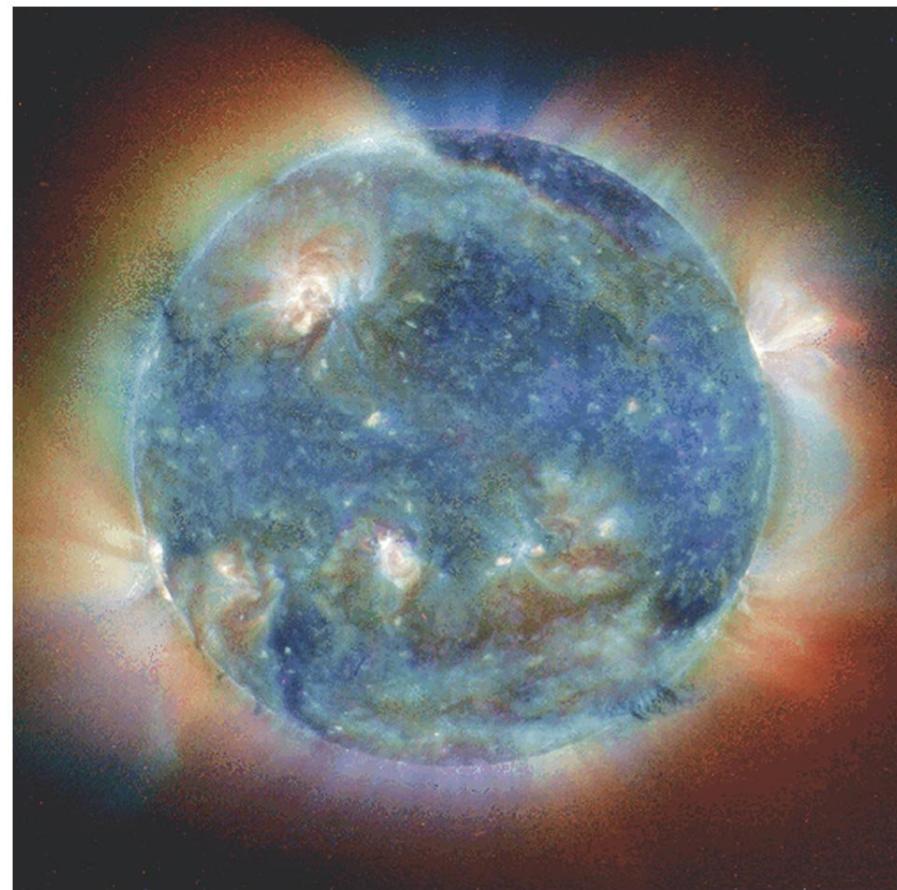


SOHO: Eavesdropping on the Sun

**SOHO: Solar and
Heliospheric Observatory**

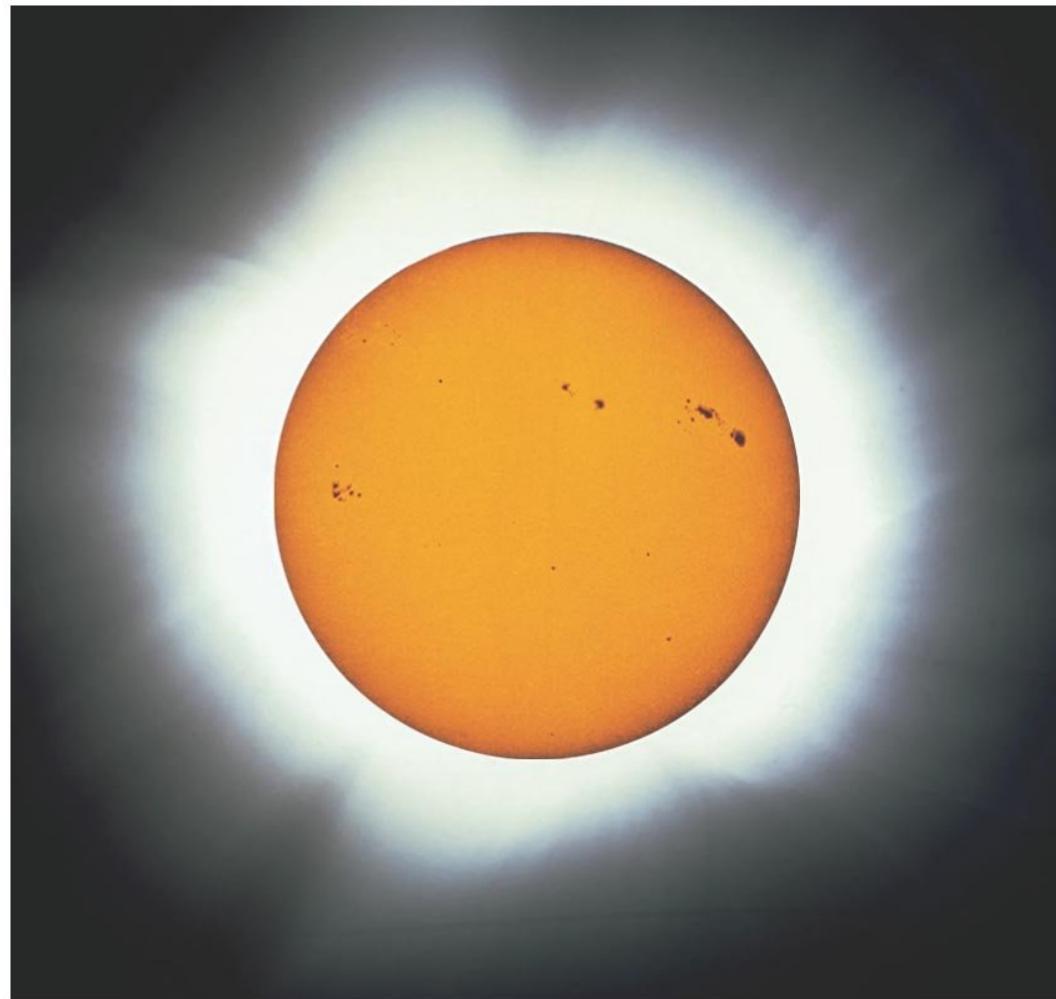
**Measures magnetic field,
corona, vibrations, and
UV emissions**

Finds comets!



16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

This composite image shows both the filamentary corona and the sharp outline of the photosphere.



16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

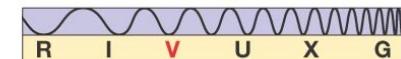
The colorful chromosphere is above the photosphere.

The chromosphere is reddish-pink.

Lower density than photosphere.

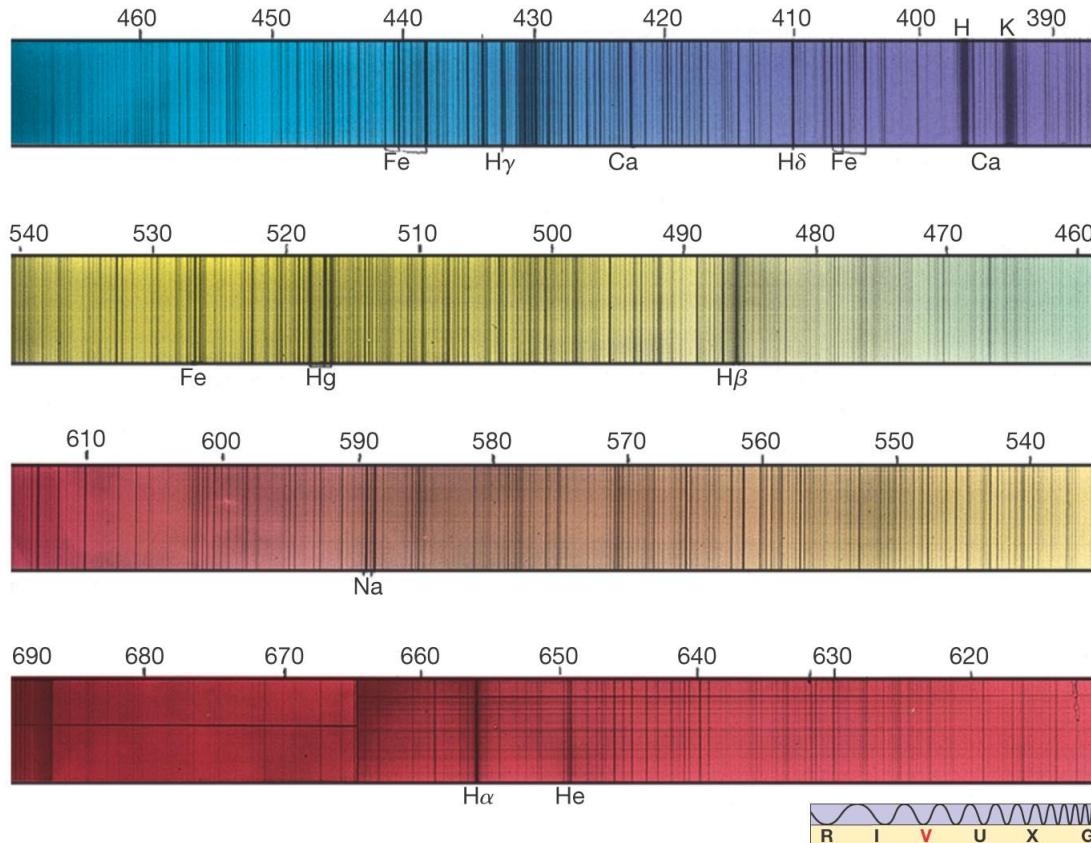
Non-uniform coverage.

Temp increases with height from 4400 K to 25,000 K in 2000 km in the transition zone.



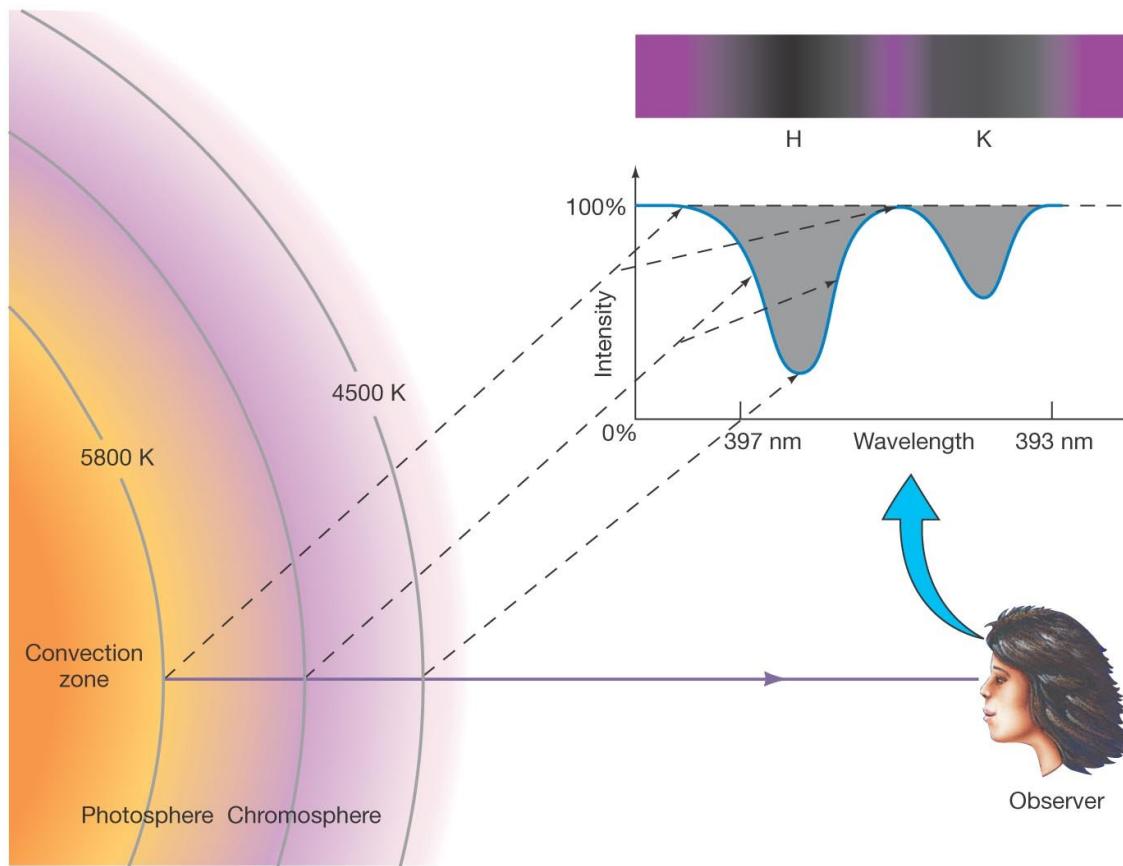
16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

Spectral analysis can tell us what elements are present in the chromosphere and photosphere of the Sun. This spectrum has lines from 67 different elements:



16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

Spectral absorption lines. We can't see as deep into the Sun at the wavelengths being absorbed.

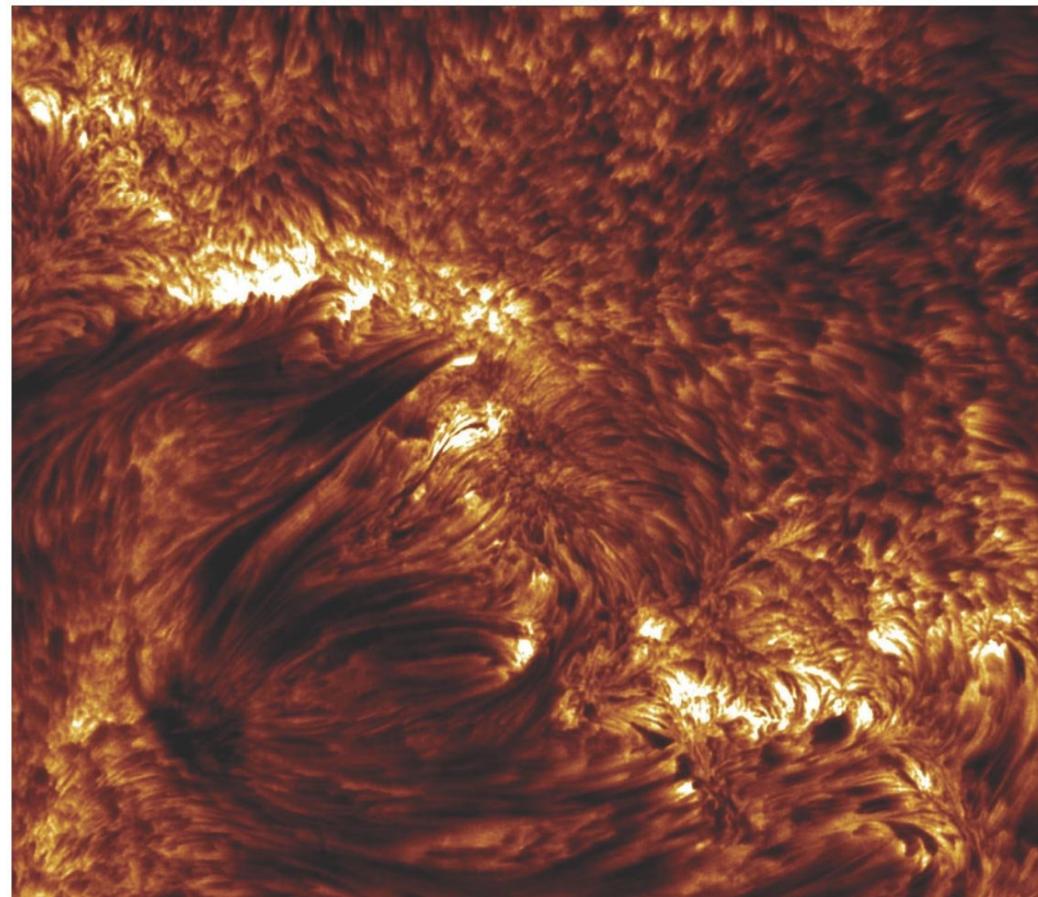


16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

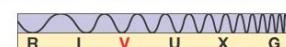
Small solar storms in chromosphere emit spicules: tubes of magnetically channeled hot gas

Last ~10 minutes.

Dark because hotter gas absorbs Halpha better.



|—————|
3000 km



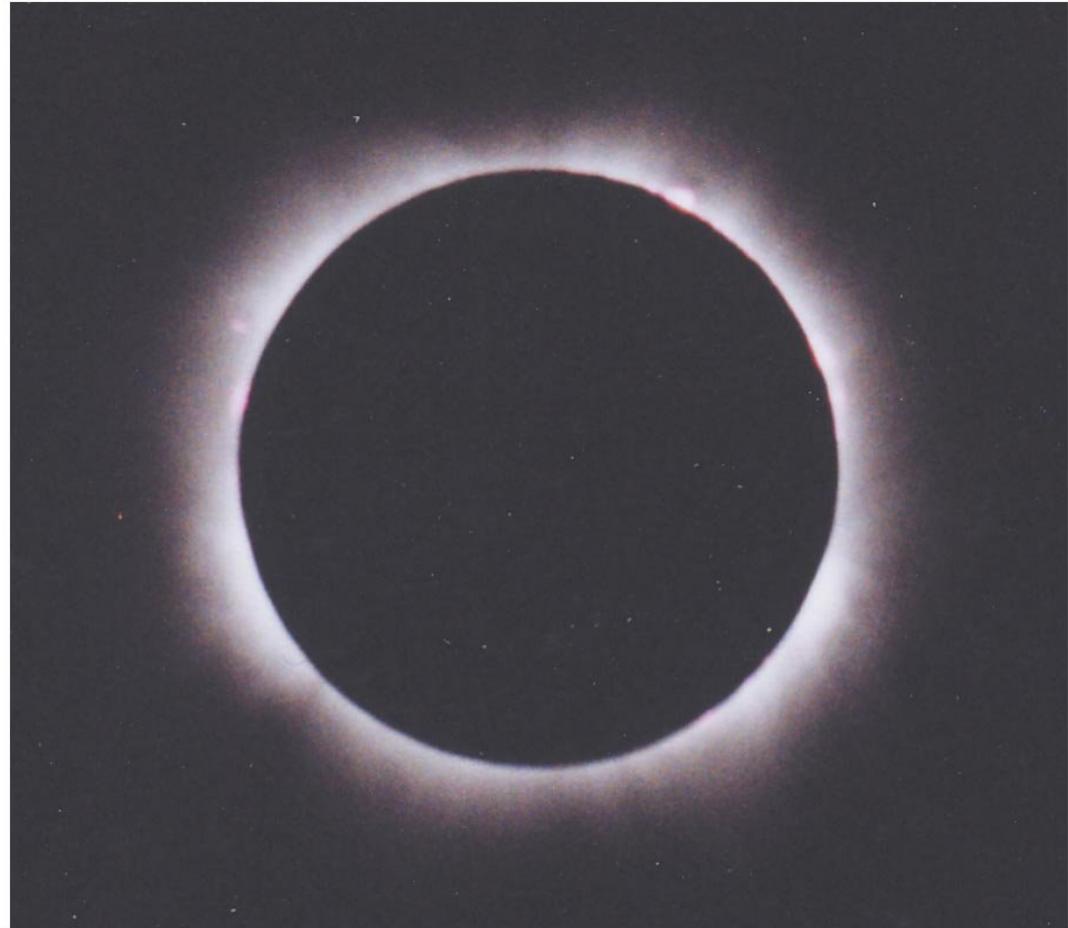
16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

Solar corona

Hottest (10^6 K)
and thinnest part
of the Sun's
atmosphere.

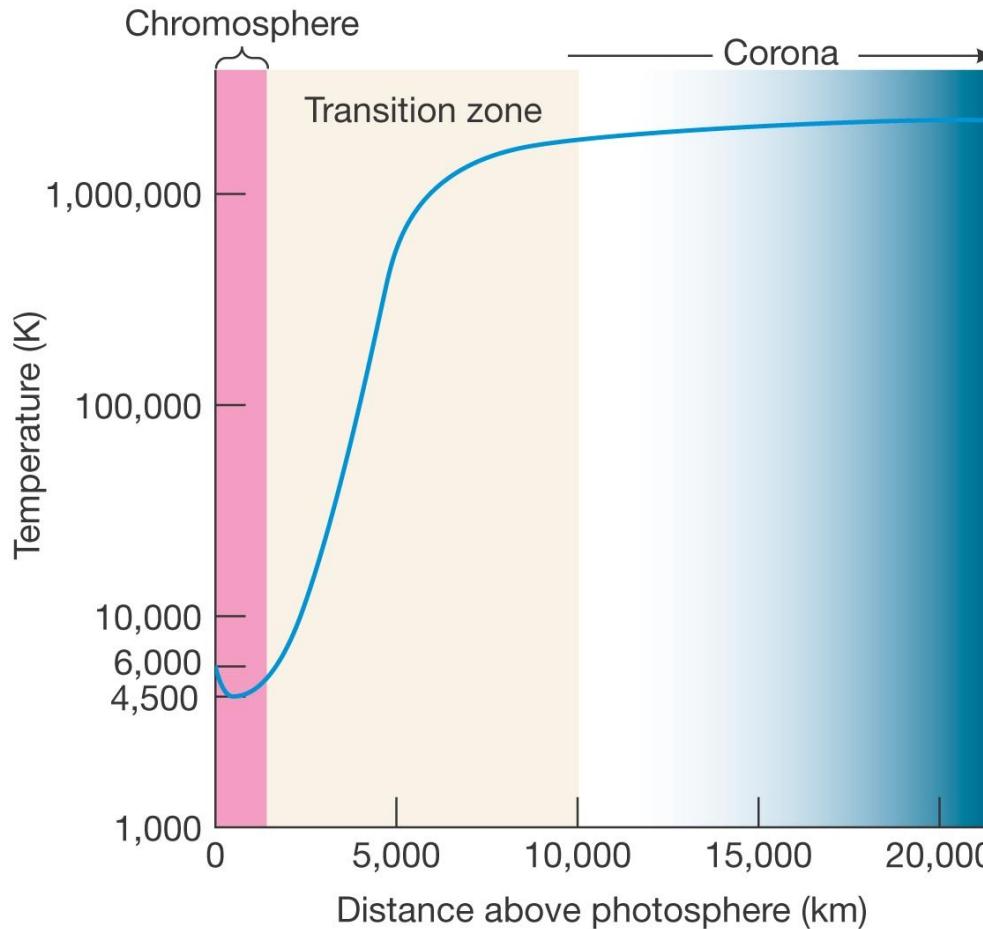
Spectrum shows
emission lines
from highly
ionized species of
iron and helium.

("coronium")



16.3 The Sun's Atmosphere

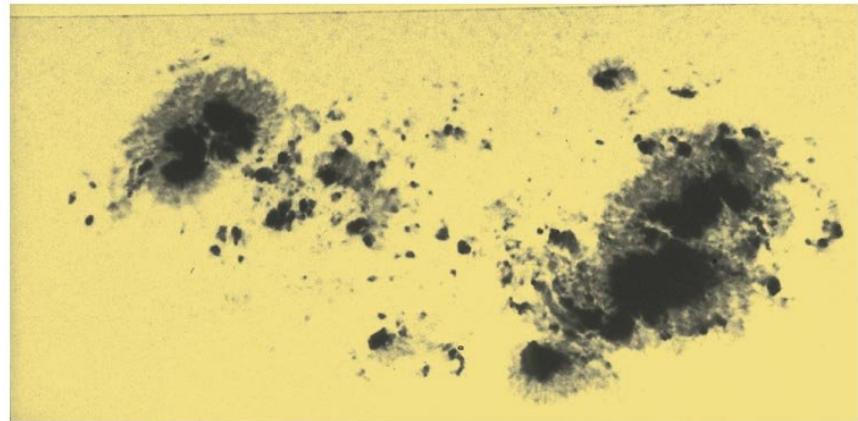
Corona is much hotter than layers below it—
must have a heat source ...



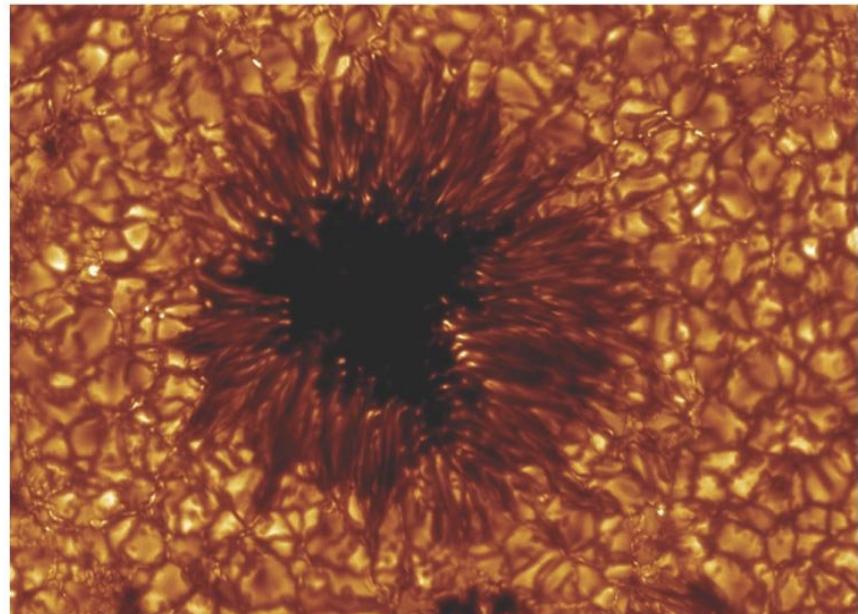
... magnetic reconnection?

16.4 Solar Magnetism

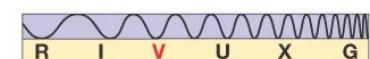
Sunspots: Appear dark because slightly cooler than surroundings



(a) ← 50,000 km →



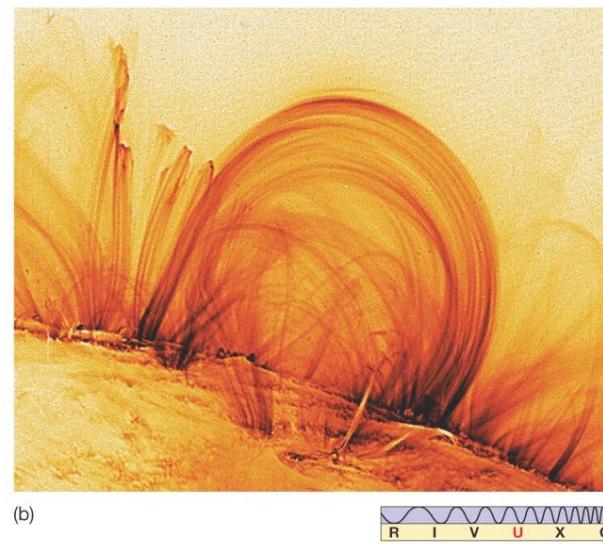
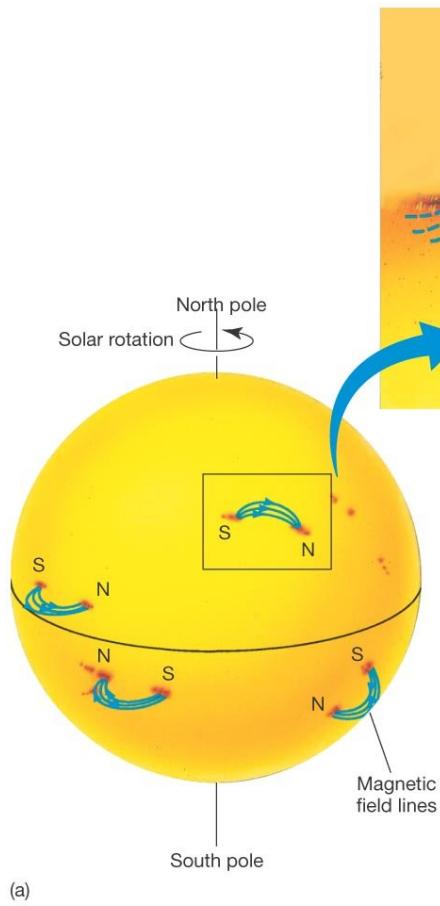
(b) ← 10,000 km →



16.4 Solar Magnetism

Sunspots come and go, typically in days to weeks.

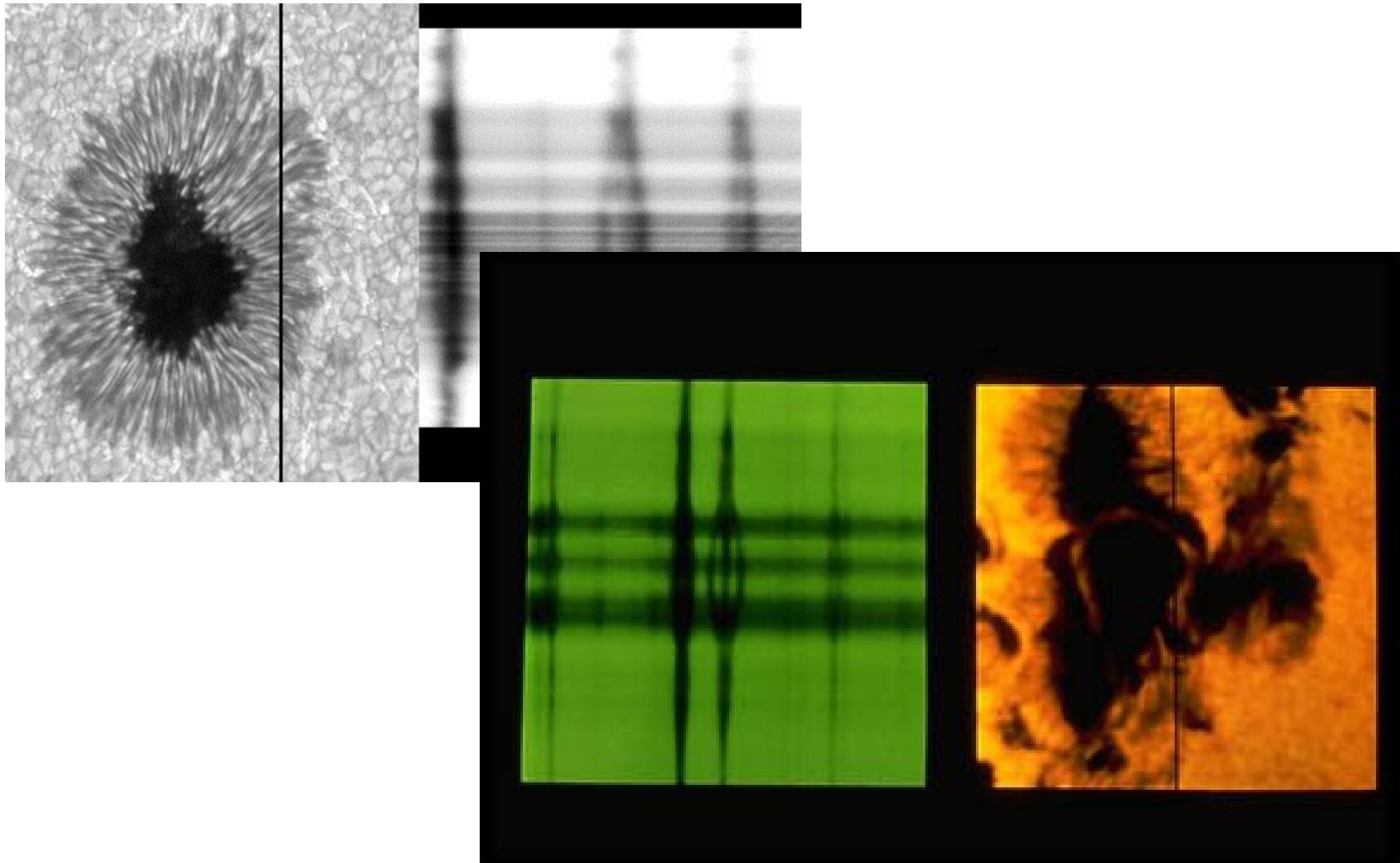
Pairs of sunspots are linked by magnetic field lines:



Charged particles cannot move across magnetic fields, only along them.

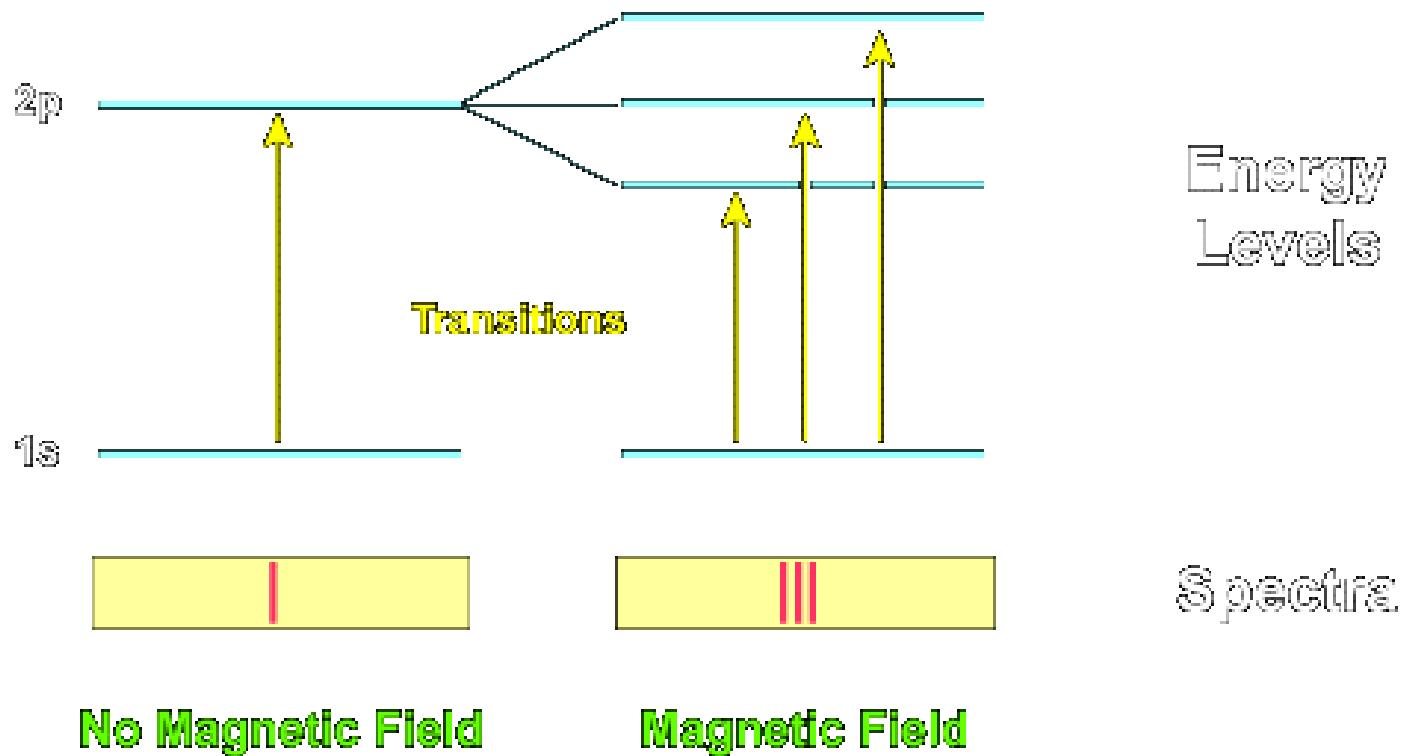
16.4 Solar Magnetism

Confirmation of strong magnetic fields in sunspots ...
the Zeeman Effect!



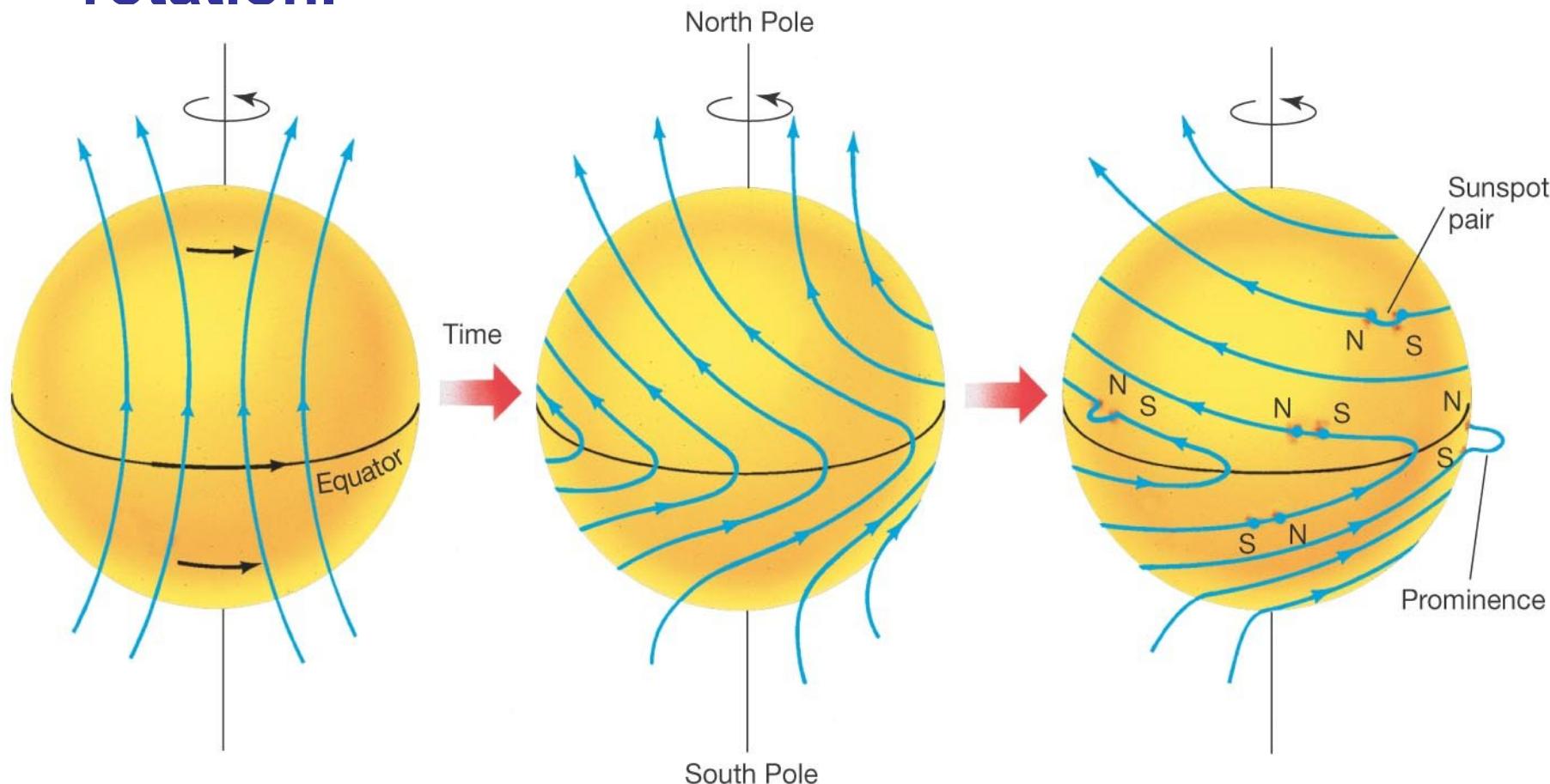
16.4 Solar Magnetism

The Zeeman Effect Is explained in terms of splitting energy levels in atoms.



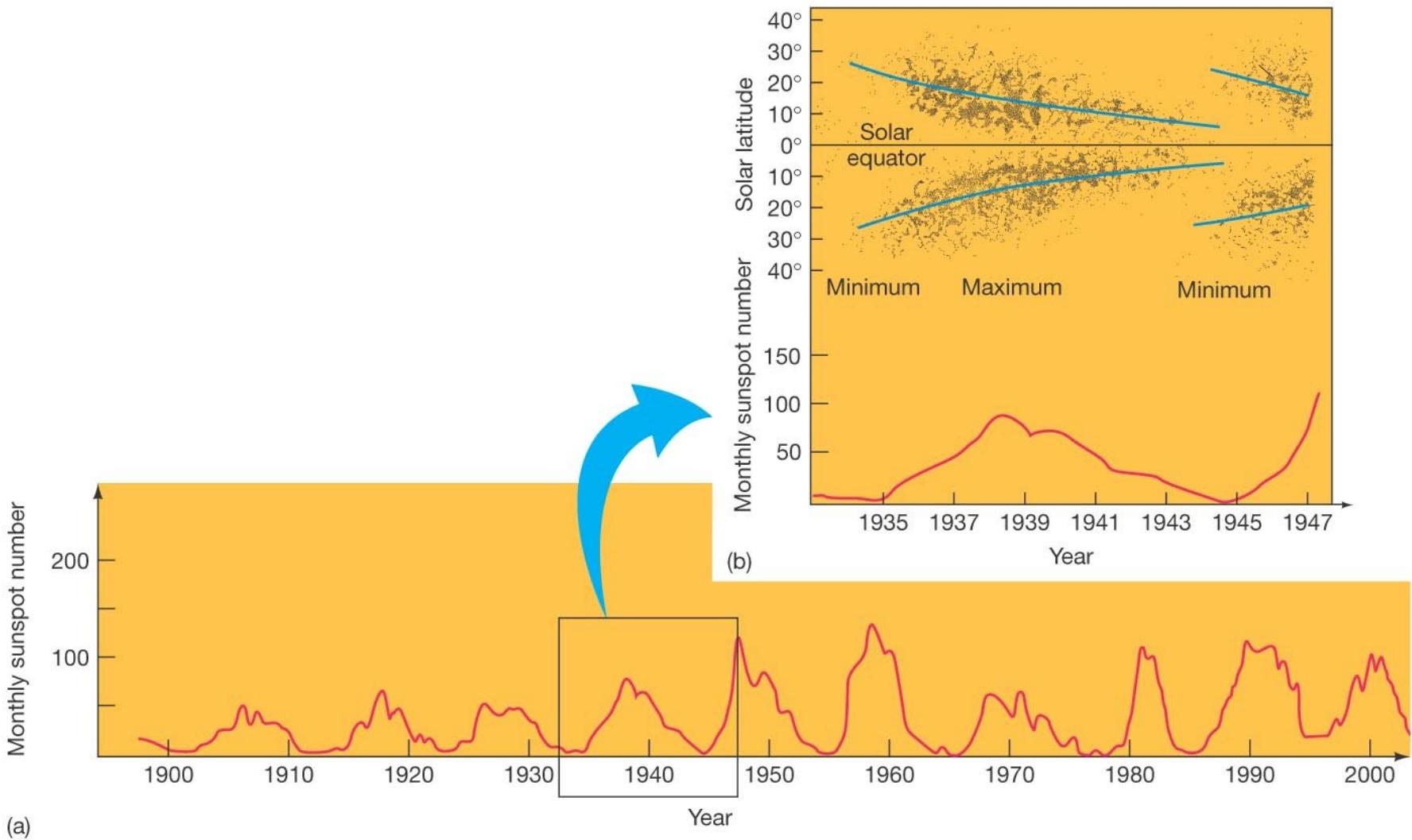
16.4 Solar Magnetism

Sunspots originate when magnetic field lines are distorted by Sun's differential rotation.



16.4 Solar Magnetism

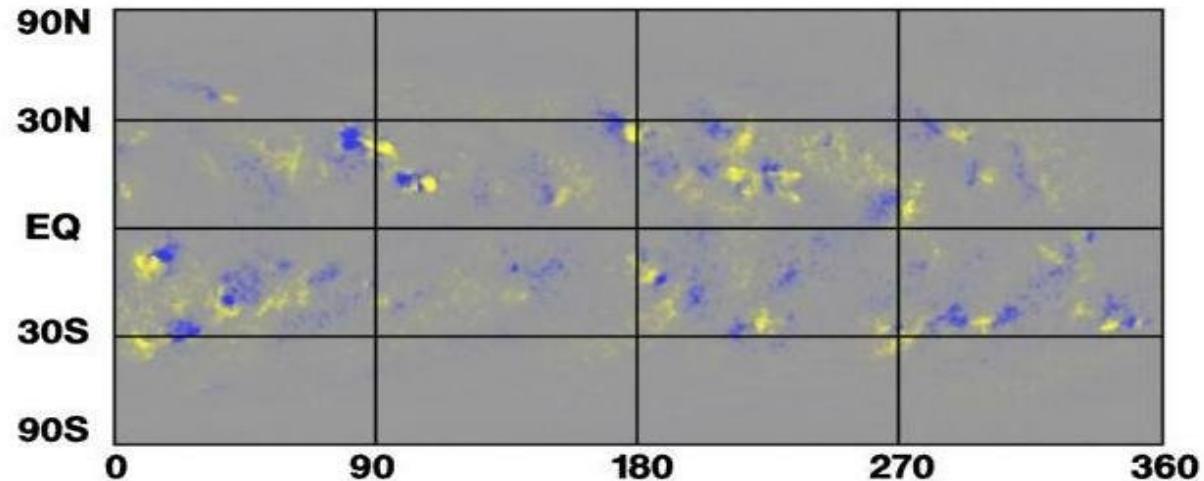
The Sun has an 11-year sunspot cycle.



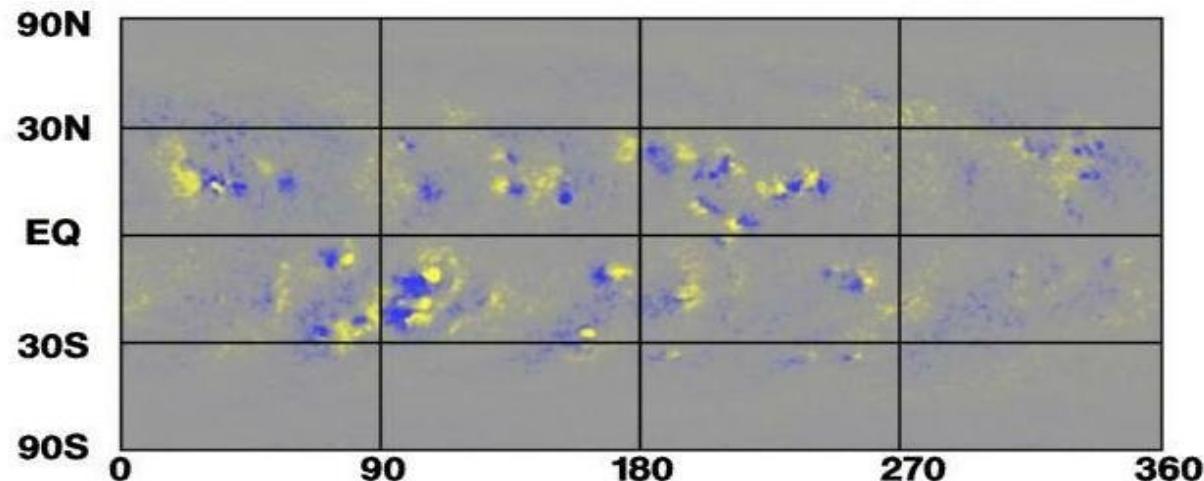
16.4 Solar Magnetism

This is really a 22-year cycle, because the spots switch polarities every 11 years.

Cycle 21



Cycle 22



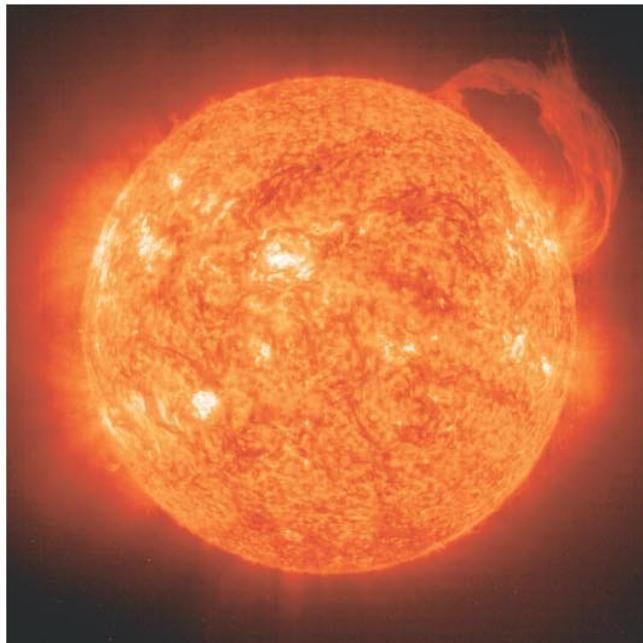
16.5 The Active Sun

Areas around sunspots are active.

Solar prominence : gas loop on limb (bright)

Solar Filament: gas loop viewed “head on” (dark)

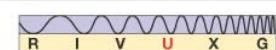
Coronal mass ejection: loop breaks, gas ejected



(a) **Solar Flare:**

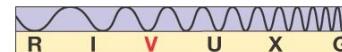
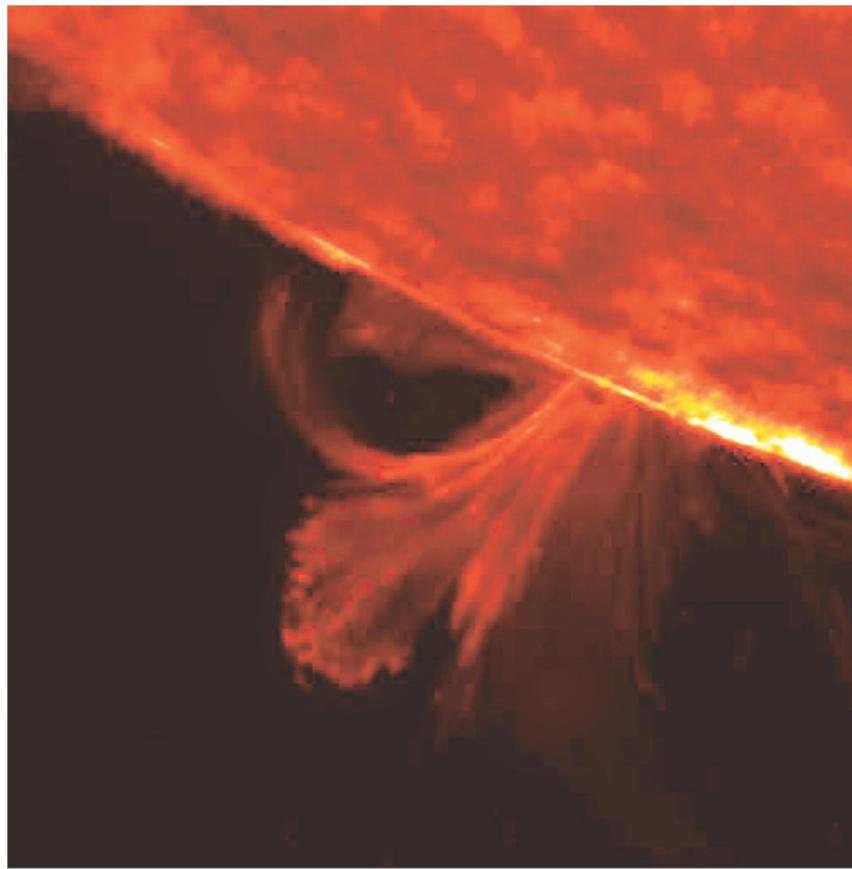


(b)



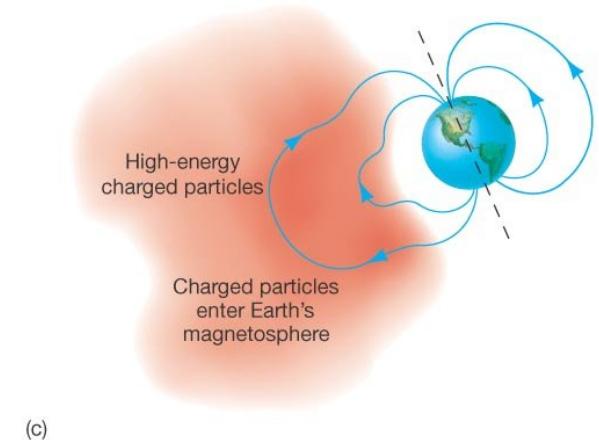
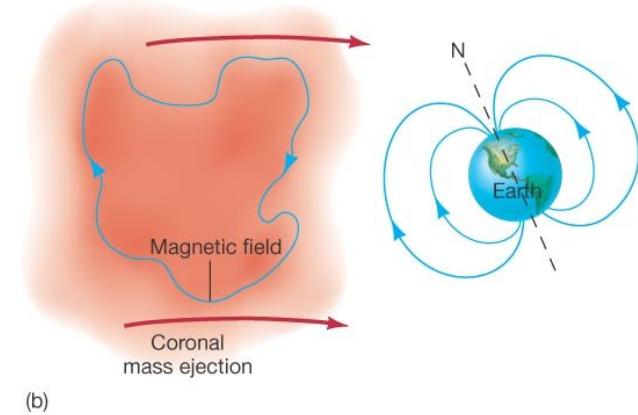
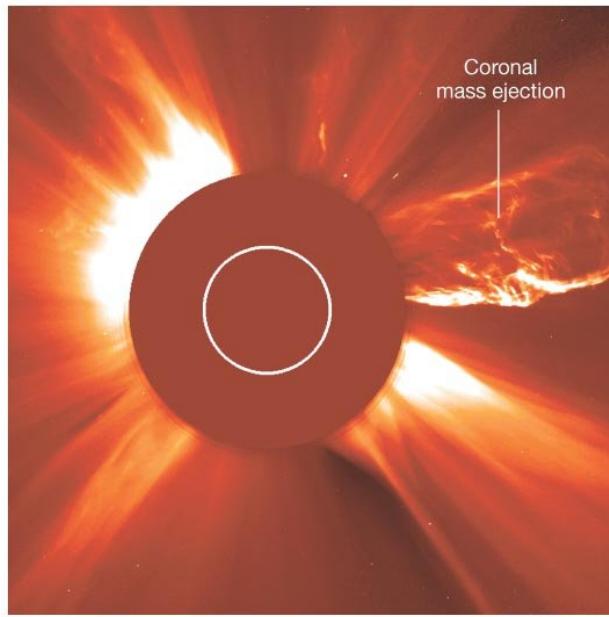
16.5 The Active Sun

Solar flare is a large explosion on Sun's surface, emitting a similar amount of energy to a prominence, but in seconds or minutes rather than days or weeks:

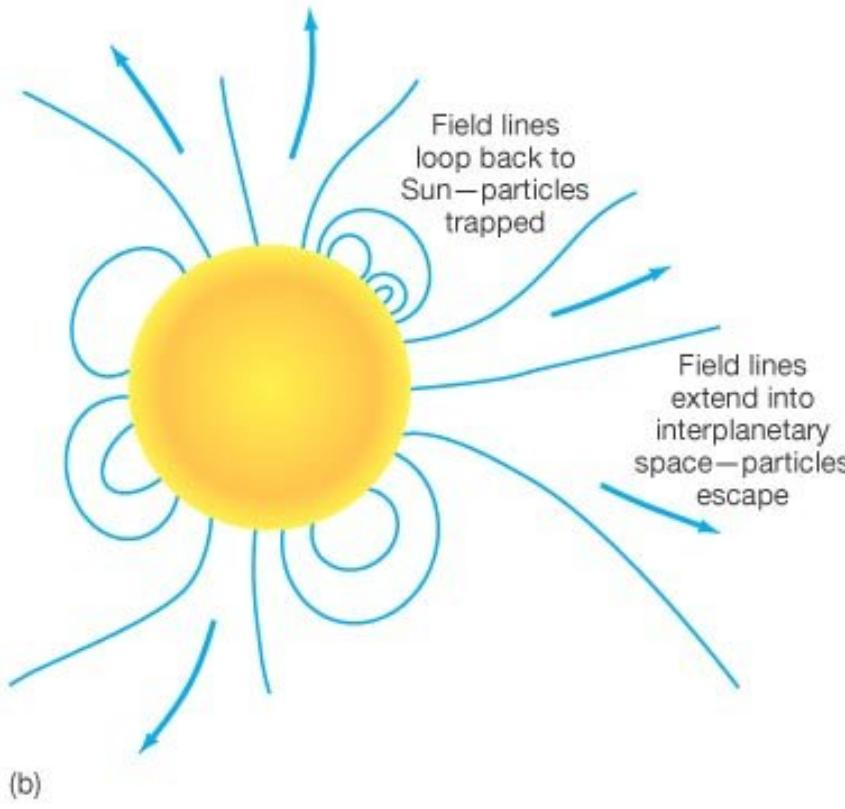
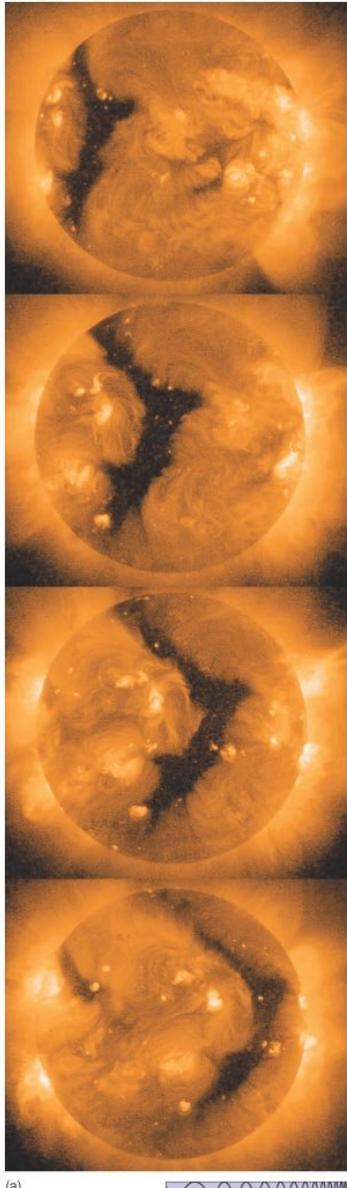


16.5 The Active Sun

Coronal mass ejection occurs when a large “bubble” of gas detaches from the Sun and escapes into space.



16.5 The Active Sun

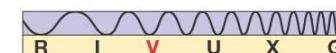
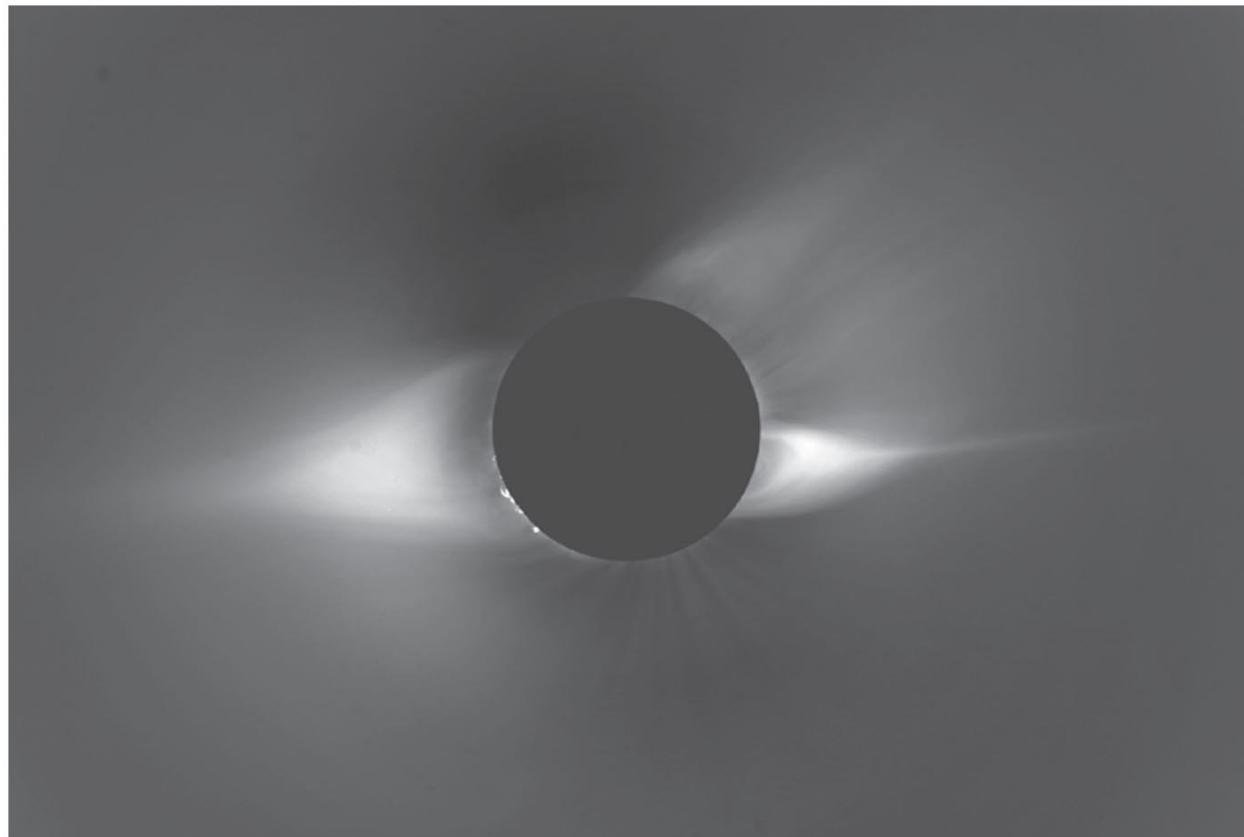


Solar wind escapes the Sun mostly through coronal holes, which can be seen in X-ray images as dark regions.



16.5 The Active Sun

Solar corona changes along with sunspot cycle; it is much larger and more irregular at sunspot peak.



16.5 The Active Sun

**See YouTube video “Sun Montage – SOHO”
for video of all of the preceding phenomena.**

Influence of Solar activity on Earth.

Solar constant increases by <0.1% during active phase.

Increase more in UV, x-ray faculae, plage compensate for sunspots

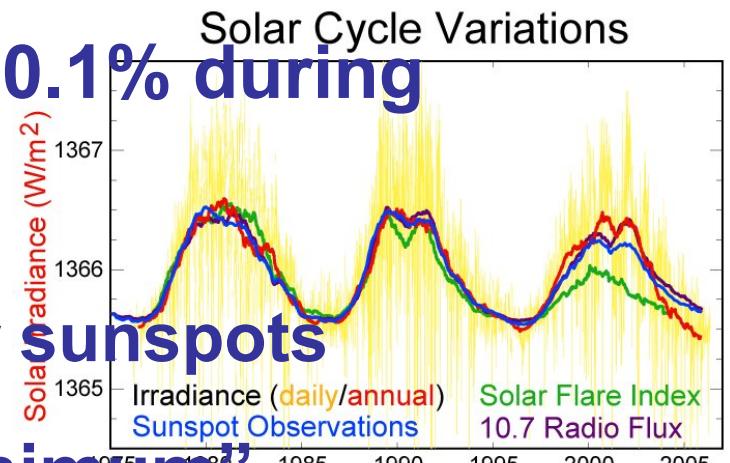
1645-1715 = the “Maunder Minimum”

Cooler temps in Europe

Other causes besides Sun (volcanos)

Solar flares ionize atmosphere and disrupt electronics; endanger astronauts.

Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) lead to ionospheric storms, power grids & satellites disrupted



16.6 The Heart of the Sun

What powers the Sun??

It emits energy at the rate of 4×10^{26} W.

It emits at this rate for 10 billion years.

We find that the total lifetime energy output is about 3×10^{13} J/kg

This is a lot, and it is produced steadily, not explosively. How?

16.6 The Heart of the Sun

Gravitational contraction? no

Combustion? no ($\sim 10^8$ J/kg, 10^7 for petrol)

Nuclear fusion yes!

In general, nuclear fusion works like this:



But where does the energy come from?

- It comes from the change in mass:

The initial mass is greater than the final mass.

The total mass-energy must stay constant.

16.6 The Heart of the Sun

The conversion between mass and energy comes from Einstein's famous equation:

$$E = mc^2$$

E = energy

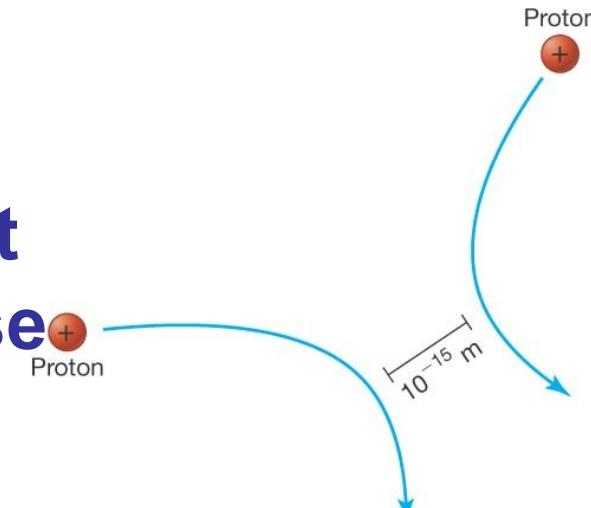
c is the speed of light

m=difference between final and initial mass

→ a small amount of mass becomes a large amount of energy

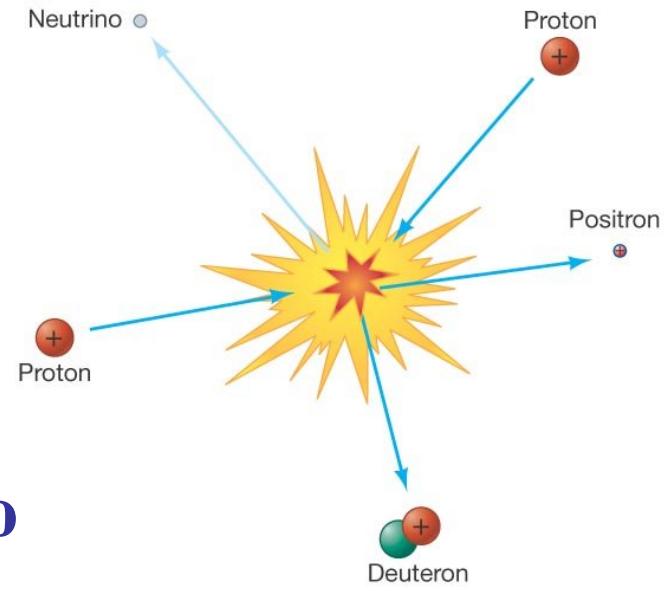
16.6 The Heart of the Sun

Nuclear fusion requires that like-charged nuclei get close enough to each other to fuse.



(a)

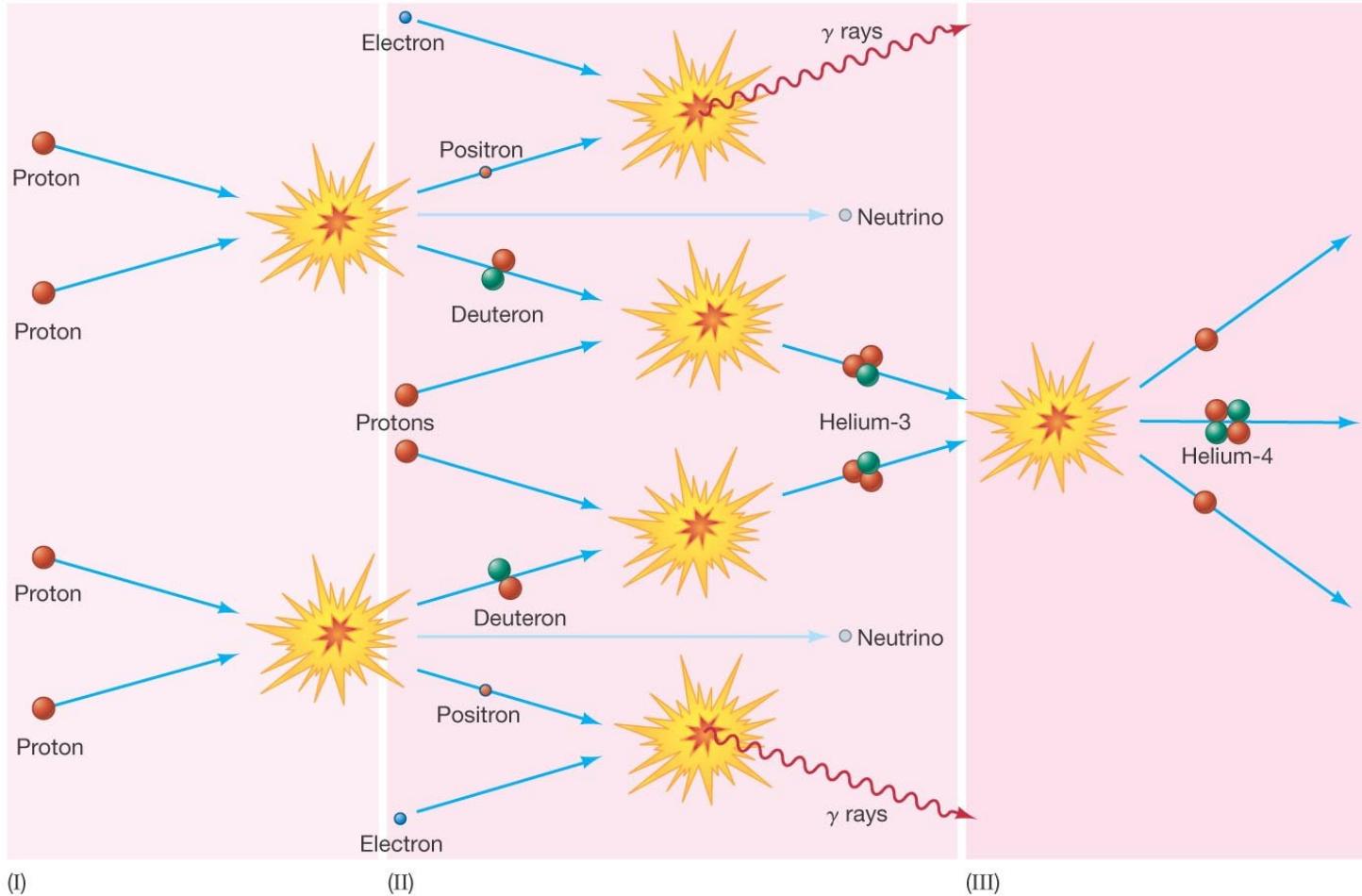
This can happen only if the temperature is extremely high—over 10 million K.



(b)

16.6 The Heart of the Sun

This is the first step in a three-step fusion process that powers most stars:



16.6 The Heart of the Sun

The second step is the formation of an isotope of helium:



The final step takes two of the helium-3 isotopes and forms helium-4 plus two protons:



16.6 The Heart of the Sun

The ultimate result of the process:



The helium stays in the core.

The energy is in the form of gamma rays, which gradually lose their energy as they travel out from the core, emerging as visible light.

The neutrinos escape without interacting.

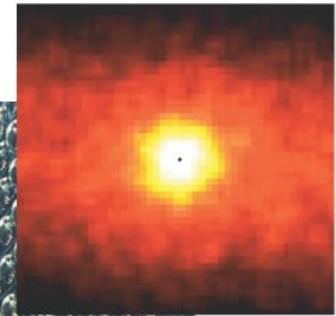
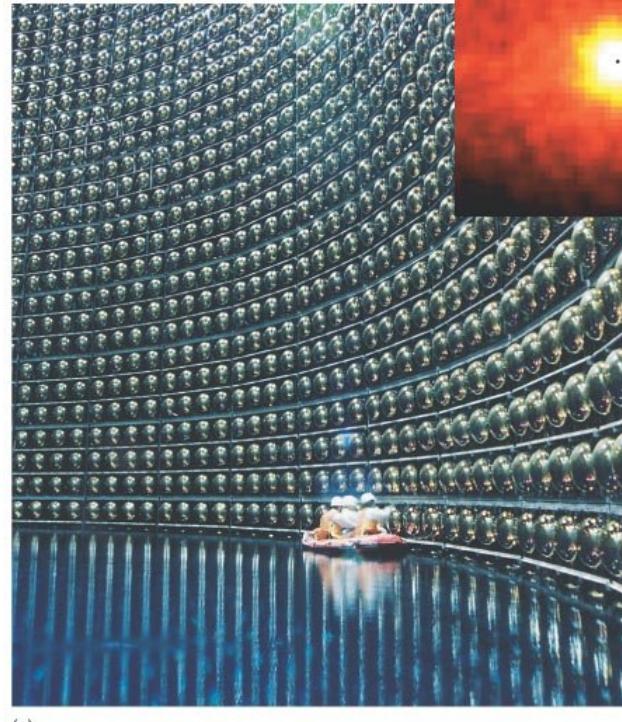
16.6 The Heart of the Sun

Sun must convert 4.3 million tons of matter into energy every second.

The Sun has enough hydrogen left to continue fusion for about another 5 billion years.

16.7 Observations of Solar Neutrinos

Typical solar neutrino detectors; resolution is very poor



16.7 Observations of Solar Neutrinos

Detection of solar neutrinos has been going on for more than 30 years now; there has always been a deficit in the type of neutrinos expected to be emitted by the Sun.

Recent research proves that the Sun is emitting about as many neutrinos as the standard solar model predicts, but the neutrinos change into other types of neutrinos between the Sun and the Earth, causing the apparent deficit.