



# How we see the Moon

The way we see the Moon depends on how we see the light it reflects from the Sun.

The Moon takes just over 28 days, about one month, to go around, or orbit, the Earth.

## Moonlight

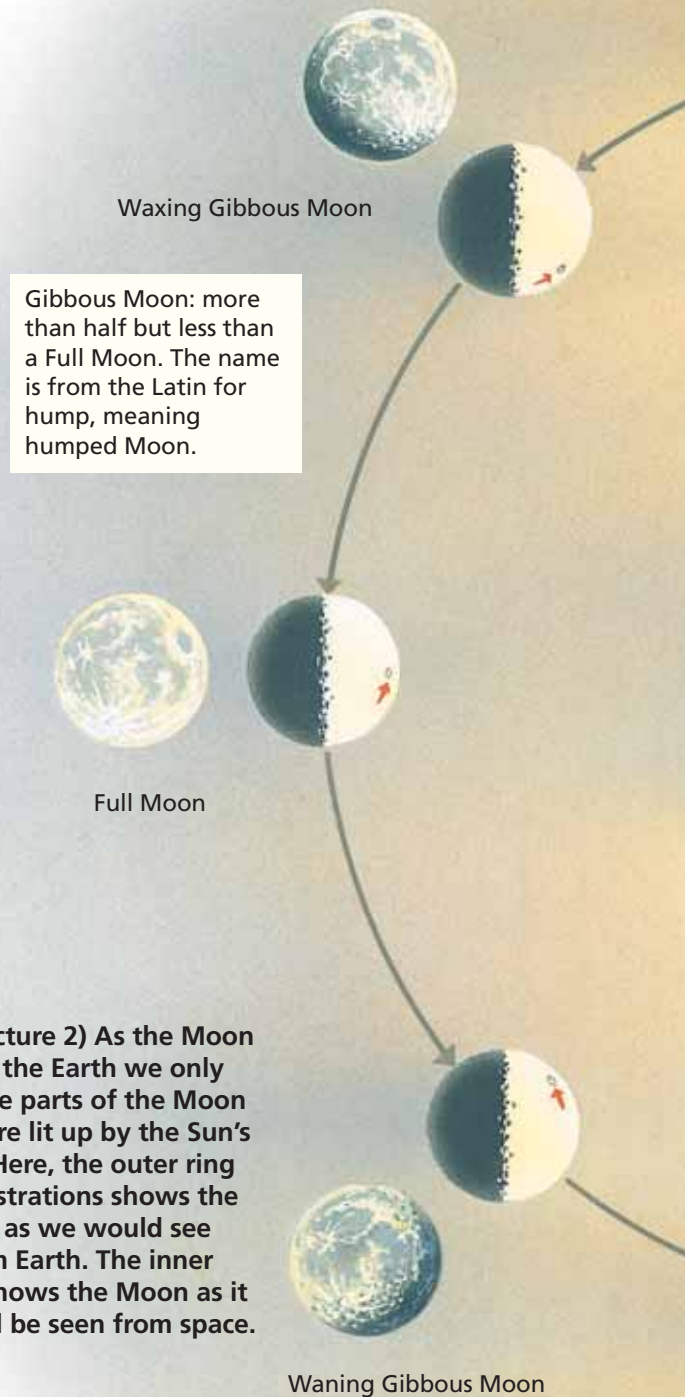
The Moon does not have any light of its own. Instead, sunlight bounces off its surface. This is only weak light and so we hardly see the Moon when it is in the sky during the day. However, at night moonlight shines with a pale yellow glow in the sky (Picture 1).

## The way moonlight changes

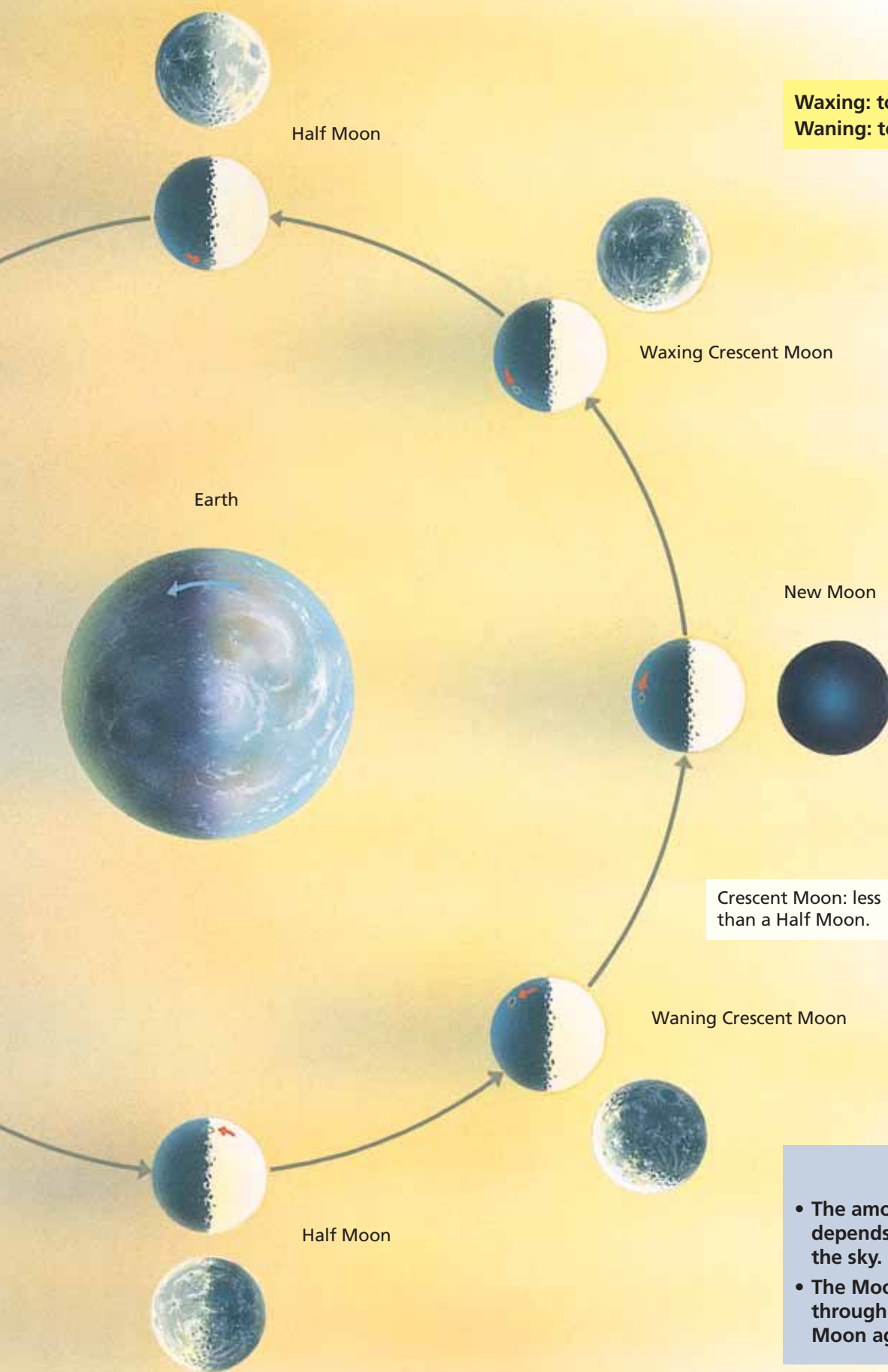
As the Moon travels around the Earth, it is in a different position in the sky each night (Picture 2). This means that the light reaching the Earth from the Moon's surface also varies. The amount of the Moon that we can see at different times of the month follows a pattern called the **PHASES OF THE MOON**.



◀ (Picture 1)  
Moonlight is a pale glow because the Moon's surface is quite dark and sunlight does not bounce off it well.



▶ (Picture 2) As the Moon orbits the Earth we only see the parts of the Moon that are lit up by the Sun's rays. Here, the outer ring of illustrations shows the Moon as we would see it from Earth. The inner ring shows the Moon as it would be seen from space.



## Summary

- The amount of the Moon we see depends on where the Moon is in the sky.
- The Moon goes from New Moon, through Full Moon and back to New Moon again in just over 28 days.