

Distance to the SMC Terms

term	brief definition
Cepheid	A type of yellow, supergiant, pulsating star.
pulsating variable	A star that pulsates in size and luminosity.
satellite galaxy	A galaxy that orbits a larger galaxy due to gravitational attraction.
Small Magellanic Cloud	A dwarf irregular galaxy near the Milky Way and in orbit around it.
little m	The expression and symbol for the apparent magnitude of a star.
period luminosity relation	A relationship between the period and average luminosity of a pulsating star.
distance modulus	The difference between the apparent and absolute magnitudes of an object.
apparent magnitude	A measure of the brightness of light from a star or other object as measured from Earth.
absolute magnitude	The apparent magnitude that a star would have if it were at a distance of 10 parsecs.
light curve	A graph that displays how the brightness of a star or other astronomical object varies over time.
globular cluster	A large spherical cluster of stars, typically found in the halo of a galaxy.
metallicity	The fraction or percentage of the mass of a star or other kind of astronomical object that is not in hydrogen or helium.
population I	A star whose spectrum exhibits spectral lines of many elements heavier than helium; a metal-rich star.
population II	A star whose spectrum exhibits comparatively few spectral lines of elements heavier than helium; a metal-poor star.