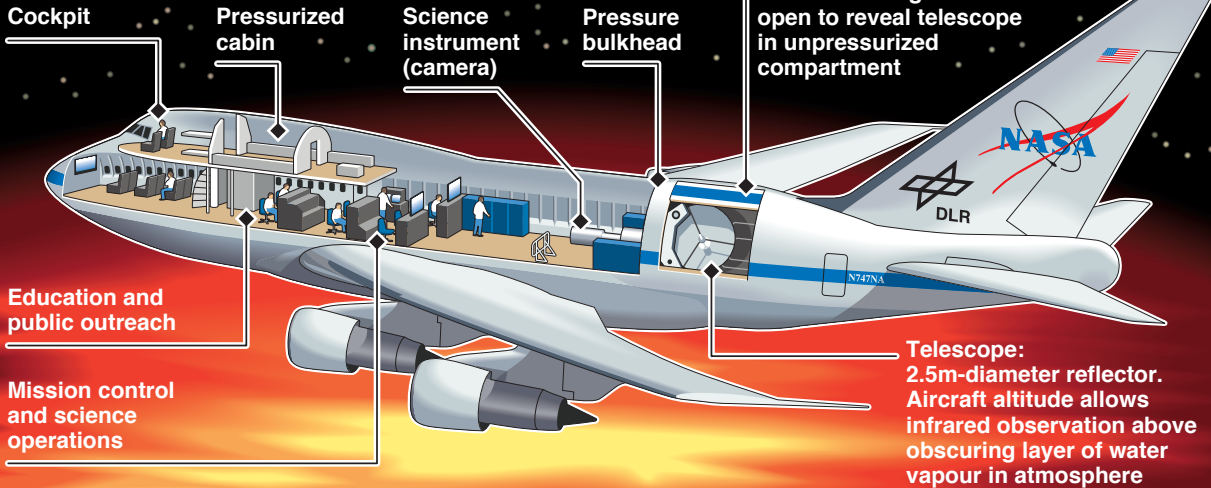


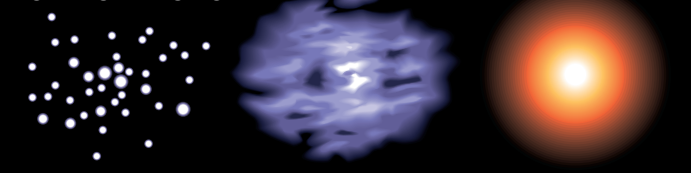
NASA's SOFIA airborne observatory takes flight

The Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, or SOFIA, a joint U.S.-German project featuring a 15-tonne telescope mounted on a jumbo jet, is beginning its first full cycle of science flights in an effort to help astronomers better understand how stars form and evolve

BOEING 747SP: Heavily modified former Pan Am airliner



HOW A STAR IS BORN

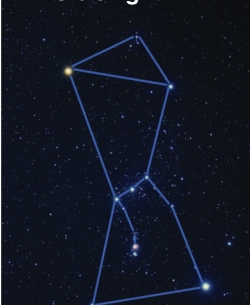


1 Over millions of years, vast clouds of interstellar dust and gas are pulled together by force of gravity

2 Cloud contracts under its own gravity. Centre becomes denser and hotter, forming protostar – visible in infrared

3 When internal pressure equals gravity pushing in, hydrogen is fused into helium and star is born

Constellation of Orion in visible light



What SOFIA sees in infrared

