

Galaxy Interactions

1

We can see many examples of pairs of galaxies interacting with one another



The Whirlpool Galaxy (M51)

2

During these interactions, stars don't collide, but they change orbits (as does gas and dust) leading to rings (left), tendrils (right), and other structures



4

Interactions can trigger new waves of star formation, leading to a “starburst” galaxy



3

Often, the outcome of an interaction is a merger (from equal-sized galaxies) or cannibalism (from unequal-sized galaxies)