

Expansion of the Universe

After the Big Bang, the universe expanded and cooled. At about 10^{-6} second, the universe consisted of a soup of quarks, gluons, electrons, and neutrinos. When the temperature of the Universe, T_{universe} , cooled to about 10^{12} K, this soup coalesced into protons, neutrons, and electrons. As time progressed, some of the protons and neutrons formed deuterium, helium, and lithium nuclei. Still later, electrons combined with protons and these low-mass nuclei to form neutral atoms. Due to gravity, clouds of atoms contracted into stars, where hydrogen and helium fused into more massive chemical elements. Exploding stars (supernovae) form the most massive elements and disperse them into space. Our earth was formed from supernova debris.

