

Exploring Leo - Activities (Ages 8-11)



Today we are going to investigate:

- How to find Leo in Night Sky
- The mythological story behind this constellation
- The brightest star in this constellation
- A star cluster in its neighbouring constellation

Activities

- 1 Today we are going to explore a famous springtime constellation. Night Sky can show you exactly where this constellation is located. Use the Space Travel tab to set Night Sky to any evening in May. Look to the south for Leo. Its stars seem to trace out the shape of a lion lying on its belly. Some people say this pattern could also represent a famous ancient monument.

Question: What monument do you think this could be?

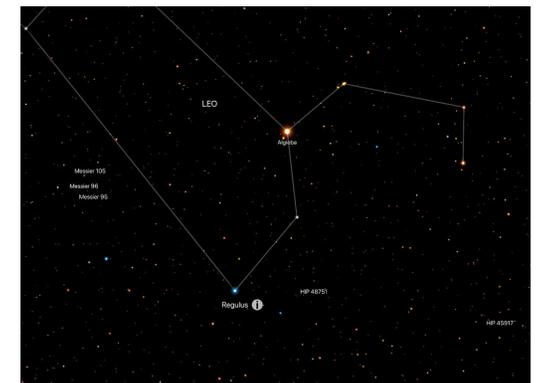
- a) Great Pyramid b) Great Wall of China c) Great Sphinx

- 2 This star pattern commemorates a tale from ancient mythology. The Nemean Lion was a dangerous giant lion with skin no arrow or spear could pierce. It was finally defeated by a mighty hero. The beast and the hero both have their own constellations in different parts of the sky. Leo is the Nemean Lion.

Question: Which constellation do you think represents the hero who fought Leo?

- a) Orion the Hunter b) Hercules c) Andromeda the Princess

- 3 A brilliant blue star called Regulus is the brightest star in Leo. In fact, ancient stargazers thought Regulus ruled its part of the sky and the name they gave it reflects this.



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Question: What do you think Regulus means?

- a) "Little King" b) "Champion Star" c) "Mighty Hero"

- 4 Regulus is a strange-looking star. It spins around very, very fast and this makes Regulus look very strange. Other stars like the Sun are round balls but Regulus is very different. Find Regulus on the screen and double tap on it to show a 3D model of this star. Prepare for a surprise!

Questions: Can you think of any everyday objects similar in shape to Regulus?

- 5 Leo is close to another constellation. It is called Cancer (the Crab). Leo actually seems to be looking towards an object in Cancer. Astronomers call this object Messier 44 but it also has a more fun nickname, the Beehive Cluster.

Discussion Question: Find the Beehive Cluster in Night Sky (TIP: if you need to type "Messier 44" or even "Beehive" into Search). Why it is called this name?

What we have discovered:

- Leo is a constellation shaped like a lion
- It represents a creature from Greek myth
- Regulus is the brightest star in Leo
- Regulus is a star with a strange shape
- The Beehive is a cluster of stars near Leo



Well done!
You're a Night Sky
Superstar!