

Exploring Scorpius - Educator's Guide (Ages 8-11)



At the end of these Night Sky activities students will understand:

- Where to find the constellation Scorpius
- Antares is the brightest star in the constellation
- The Ptolemy cluster is one of the open clusters in Scorpius
- Part of Scorpius was split off to form Libra

Astronomy background information

Scorpius resembles a striking scorpion in front of the Milky Way. In Greek mythology it was said to represent the scorpion that fatally stung Orion the Hunter. The brilliant orange star Antares strongly resembles the planet Mars, hence ancient stargazers called it the “Rival of Mars” or Antares. The star is a red supergiant located about 550 light-years from the Sun.

The star cluster Messier 7 is bright enough to see with the unaided eye. It was first described by Roman astronomer Claudius Ptolemy (c. 100 – c. 170 CE) so is often called the “Ptolemy Cluster”. It is about 1,000 light-years away and is an open cluster of around 80 young stars which formed together.

Scorpius was originally a much larger constellation. Over two thousand years ago, astronomers wanted to create a new constellation, so the stars forming the original claws were split off to create the neighbouring constellation of Libra (the Scales).

Night Sky App Essential Settings

Go to Night Sky Settings  and make sure the following Preferences are set.

Turn On these Effects:

Environment Based Horizons
Show Glass Mythology
Show Constellation Lines
Enable Messier objects

Turn Off these Effects:

Show Satellites
Daytime Effect
Real Sky Representation
Show Ecliptic Line (at start of activity)
Show Trajectories and Orbits

Accessible Learning:

- Text size can be increased in the Preferences section
- Star numbers can be reduced by sliding two fingers down the screen

