

Planning A Stargazing Session – Leader's Guide (Ages 12-15)



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

- How to check the weather conditions and Moon phase
- How to see the time and date of ISS and Starlink flyovers
- How to find out the position of the constellations and planets
- How to protect their eyes' dark adaptation using Night Sky's Night Mode

Astronomy background information

The Tonight panel accessed through the Main Menu in Night Sky lists the predicted weather conditions and planetary movements at your location. Of these the percentage Cloud Coverage and Moon Phase are the most important to help plan an observing session. Cloud coverage greater than 75% will make it impossible for meaningful stargazing.

Around full moon, moonlight can wash out fainter stars. Ideally stargazing sessions should be planned to avoid the full moon (shown as 100% phase in the app).

The International Space Station is exciting to see but will not always be visible from a given location. The time and date of the next visible flyover are displayed in the Satellites section. Strings of Starlink satellites pass over every night and these are predicted too.

The app's sky view shows the user what will be in the sky at any time or date.

In the dark our eyes adapt by becoming more sensitive to dim light to let us see fainter objects. Switching on Night Sky's Night Mode changes the screen to a dimmer red colour to avoid interfering with dark adaptation.

Night Sky App Essential Settings

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

Turn On these Effects:

Real Sky Representations
Environment Based Horizons
Show Constellations Lines
Stop Text and Lines Disappearing

Turn Off these Effects:

Draw Trajectories and Orbits
Show Ecliptic Line
Hipparcos catalog

Accessible Learning:

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

