

Exploring Auriga - Activities (Ages 8-11)



Today we are going to investigate:

- How to find Auriga in Night Sky
- The mythological story behind this constellation
- The brightest star in this constellation
- A nebula in the constellation

Activities

- 1 Today we are going to look at a winter constellation called Auriga. Auriga represents a legendary king in Greek mythology from thousands of years ago who liked to harness four horses to one vehicle and drive fast. This king's driving skills has given the constellation Auriga its everyday name.

Question: What do you think Auriga's alternative name is?

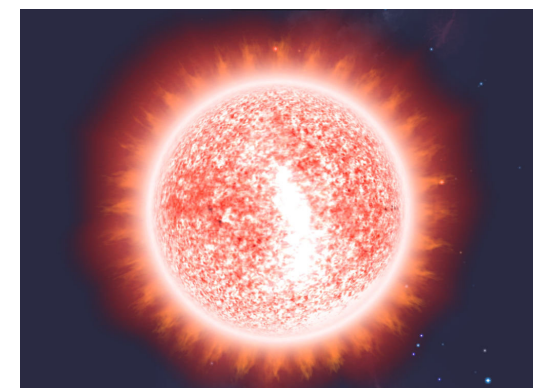
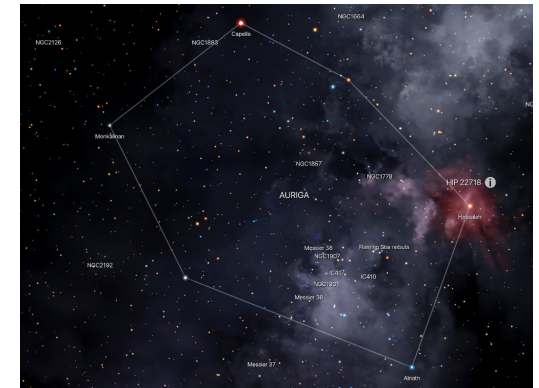
- a) The Charioteer b) The Cart Driver c) The Wagon Driver

- 2 Start up Night Sky and use the Space Travel tile to change the date to any evening in December, looking south. Move your finger to see if you can find Auriga. (Tip: If you find this hard try typing Auriga into Search). Auriga seems to be carrying farm animals.

Question: What are these animals?

- a) Pigs b) Goats c) Cattle

- 3 The brightest star in Auriga is also one of the brightest stars in the whole sky. It is called Capella. Find Capella and double tap on it to show a 3D model of this star. Tap on the ⓘ icon to bring up the information panel. Use this to find out more about Capella. You will see that Capella is not just a single star. It is really a small group of close together stars. Many stars are really members of "families" like this.



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Question: How many stars are in the Capella system?

4 A nebula is a giant cloud of dust and gas in space. Many nebulas glow in beautiful colors. Auriga is the home of a famous nebula, find it by typing Flaming Star Nebula into Search. The nebula is lit up by the light of a nearby star which shines on the clouds around it. Like most stars this star doesn't have a name, instead it has a catalog number. Keep zooming in until you find this star, it appears bluish in color.

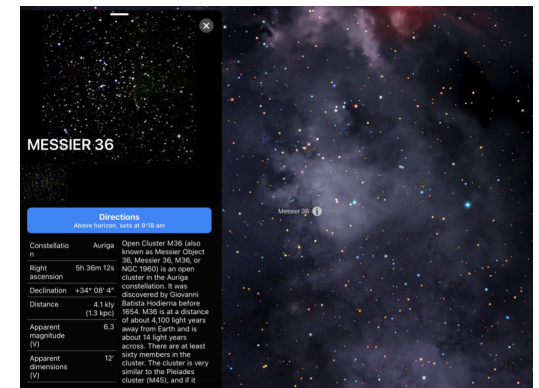
Question: What is this star's catalog number?



- a) ARM 24575 b) EAR 24575 c) HIP 24575

5 Finally we are going to find some fuzzy-looking space sights called Messier objects in the constellation of Auriga. There are three of them, called Messier 36, Messier 37 and Messier 38. Each Messier object can be one of several types of object. Use Night Sky Search to find each of them, then tap on each name to bring up the information tile  to find out more about them.

Question: What type of objects are these three Messier objects?

- a) Galaxies b) Nebulas c) Open Clusters



 Well done!
You're a Night Sky
Superstar! 

What we have discovered:

- Auriga is a constellation representing a legendary king
- Capella is the brightest star in Auriga
- The Flaming Star Nebula is a famous gas cloud in Auriga
- There are three Messier objects in this constellation