

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



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

- Where to find the constellation Auriga
- Messier 36, 37 and 38 are open clusters in Auriga
- Many stars are identified by their catalog numbers
- Capella is the brightest star in Auriga and is part of a multi-star system


Astronomy background information

The roughly vee-shaped constellation of Auriga (the Charioteer) can be seen in the winter, it represents a legendary Athenian king called Erichthonius who was famed for his chariot driving prowess. Brilliant golden-coloured Capella (meaning the Little Goat) is the brightest star in Auriga. Capella got its name because it along with some of the other stars in Auriga were once a separate constellation called Haedi (meaning the Kids). However, hundreds of years ago astronomers merged the stars of Haedi into Auriga and its name was forgotten.

A telescope will show really Capella is really a four-star system of two giant stars and two dwarf stars, about 43 light years away.

Auriga's nebula best-known nebula is IC 405, the Flaming Star Nebula. This brightly-coloured nebula is illuminated by the fast-moving star HIP 24575 (AE Aurigae) which is ploughing through the nebula. Auriga is home to Messier 36, 37 and 38, which are all open star clusters.

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
Hipparcos catalog

Turn Off these Effects:

Show Satellites
Daytime Effect
Real Sky Representation
Show Ecliptic Line
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

