

Exploring Canis Major - Activities (Ages 8-11)



Today we are going to investigate:

- How to find Canis Major in the sky
- What kind of creature does Canis major represent
- Why Sirius is a special star
- A deep sky object in Canis Major

Activities

- 1 Today we are going to look at a winter sky constellation. Start up Night Sky and use the Space Travel tile to change the time and date to any evening in December and look for a small star pattern called Canis Major. This is one of the few constellations which actually looks like the creature it is named after!

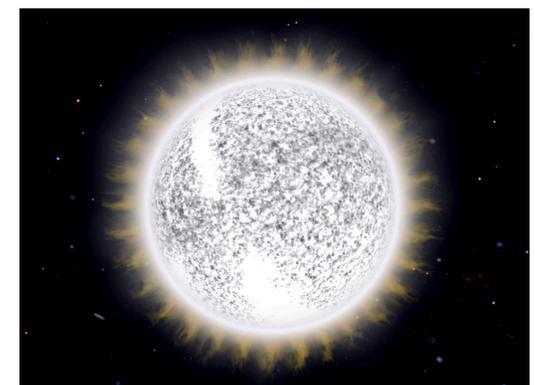
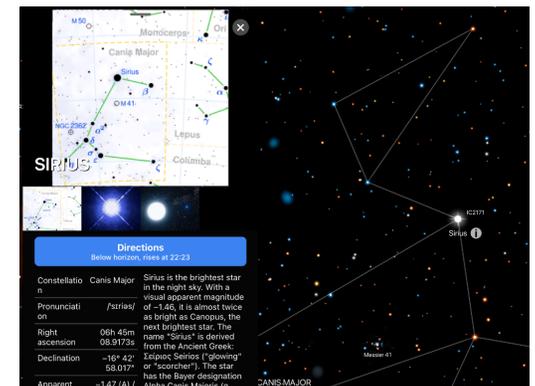
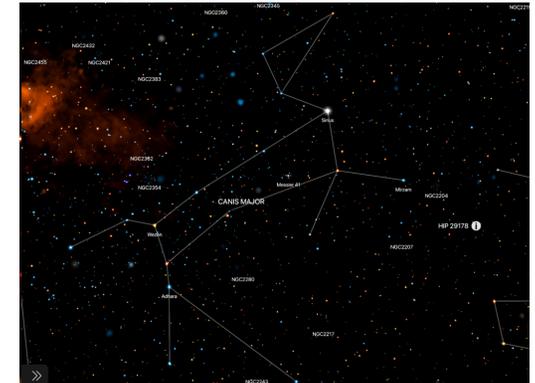
Question: Which creature does Canis represent?

- a) Bear b) Unicorn c) Whale d) Dog

- 2 The brightest star in the whole sky is located in Canis Major and is called Sirius. It is bright because it is a big star and it is close to us. Tap on the  to bring up the information tile for Sirius. Use this tile to find the answer to this question.

Question: What does the name Sirius mean in ancient Greek?

- 3 Although Sirius looks like one bright star it is actually two stars very close together. One is much brighter than the other. You need a giant telescope to see the smaller of the two stars.



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Question: What is the special name that Astronomers give to double star systems like this?

- a) Quadruple b) Binary c) Trinary d) Octagonal

- 4 Looking a Night Sky you can see a large but faint cloudy object running through Canis Major (Tip: Use the Canis Major information tile  to help you answer this question).

Question: What is this important sky feature called?

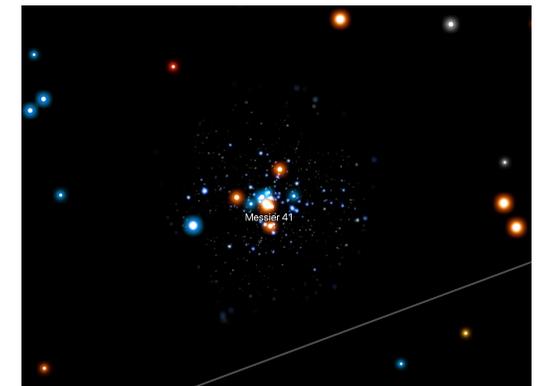
- 5 Hidden in Canis Major there is a deep space object called Messier 41. Zoom in and locate it. It is a group of stars called a cluster. Tap on the  to bring up more information on Messier 41 and find the answer to this question.

Question: What type of cluster is Messier 41

- a) Open b) Globular c) Fuzzy d) Galactic

What we have discovered:

- Canis Major is best viewed in winter
- It is a small pattern that represents an animal
- Sirius is a very bright double star
- We identified and classified a deep sky object call Messier 41



Well done!
You're a Night Sky
Superstar!