

Exploring Taurus - Activities (Ages 8-11)



Today we are going to investigate:

- Where Taurus is in the sky
- Aldebaran and the Pleiades star cluster
- The birth and death of stars

Activities

- 1 Start up Night Sky and use your finger to move around the sky. See all the creatures and people from mythology in the constellations. Find a mighty bull charging through the sky, this pattern is called Taurus. If you can't find it try typing Taurus into the search box. Taurus appears to be charging at another well-known constellation. This is a hunter defending himself from the Bull.

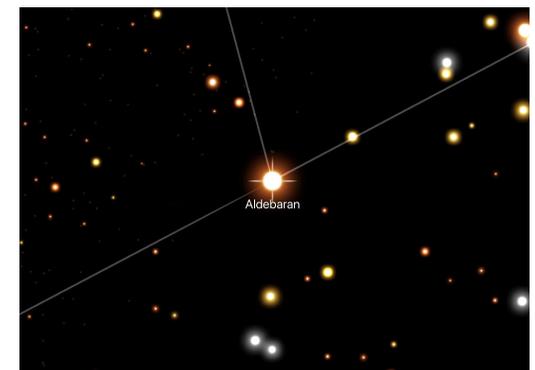
Question: What is the constellation of the hunter called?

- 2 Now we are going to look at the stars of Taurus. Go to Settings and tap on Preferences and turn off 'Show Glass Mythology'. You will see the picture of the Bull disappear. You will see that the pattern of the Bull is not so easy to imagine but you can see that there are two stars that trace out its horns. You can also see a bright orange star that represents the Bull's eye.

Question: What is this orange star called? (tip: if you can't see the name try spreading your fingers apart to zoom in on it)

- 3 Many stars have names from the Arabic language. Aldebaran means 'the Follower'. It got this name as it appears to follow a little cluster of stars across the sky. This is called the Pleiades cluster or its common name is the Seven Sisters. In the real sky it is hard to see seven stars due to light pollution. Let's take a closer look at the Pleiades by spreading your fingers apart to zoom in.

Question: Are there exactly seven stars or is the real number more or less than seven?



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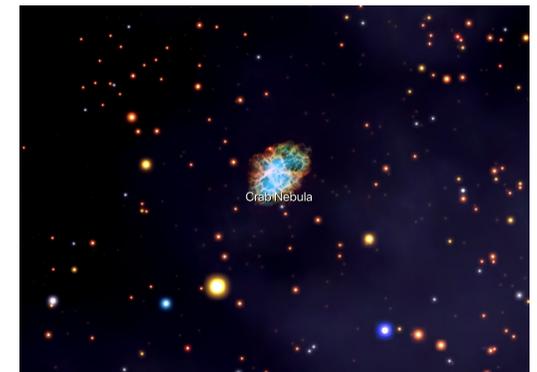
Question: What colour would you describe the Pleiades star cluster?

- 4 The Pleiades is a cluster of over 500 stars! They are young stars that were born together at the same time so they really are like sisters. The blue colour is a sign that they are very hot. As well as being born, some stars can also die. There is an example in Taurus where a star died in a spectacular explosion called a supernova in 1054 CE. We can see its remains near the tip of the lower horn of Taurus. It is called the Crab Nebula.

Question: Can you find the nebula and does it look like a crab?

What we have discovered:

- Taurus is the constellation of the bull
- Aldebaran is a bright orange star marking the eye of Taurus
- The Pleiades (Seven Sisters) is a bright star cluster in Taurus
- The Crab Nebula is the remains of a star that has exploded



★ ★ Well done!
You're a Night Sky
Superstar! ★ ★