

Greek Mythology And The Constellations - Educator's Guide (Ages 8-11)



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

- Stars are grouped together to form patterns
- These patterns are called constellations
- Ancient Greeks imagined these to be creatures and characters from their mythology
- In ancient times the constellations were used as a calendar

Astronomy background information

A constellation is a group of stars that make in a pattern in the sky. Around the world and throughout history people have divided the stars into constellations. We still use many constellations based on the mythology of the Greeks and Romans. There are 88 constellations, 48 of these date back to Roman times. These include Ursa Major (the Great Bear), Cygnus (the Swan) and Taurus (the Bull).

The remainder were added by astronomers from medieval times to the 1700s. The constellations of the Southern Hemisphere are in the latter group and are not usually named after mythological subjects. The constellations cover the whole celestial sphere. Stargazers use constellations as guide to locate objects in the sky.

As the Earth moves around the Sun every year our view of the constellations changes to a regular cycle. For example, different constellations are visible in the spring than in the fall (autumn). Ancient peoples recognised this, and planned events like crop planting and harvests to coincide with particular constellations being visible. This led to the development of calendars.

Night Sky App Essential Settings

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

Turn On these Effects:

Real Sky Representation
Environment Based Horizons

Turn Off these Effects:

Show Satellites
Show Glass Mythology (at start of Activity)
Show Constellation Lines (at start of Activity)

Accessible Learning:

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

