

Planning a Meteor Shower Viewing Session - Activities (Ages 8 Upwards)



Today we are going to investigate:

- How to use Night Sky find when meteor showers take place
- How to find when the peak of a shower occurs
- How to find the radiant of the shower
- What you need to observe a meteor shower

Activities

- 1 Throughout the year there are regular showers of meteors (shooting stars). Using Night Sky you can see a list of meteor showers. Go to the Menu and tap on Search then go to Search Filters and deselect everything except Meteor Showers. Active showers are highlighted.

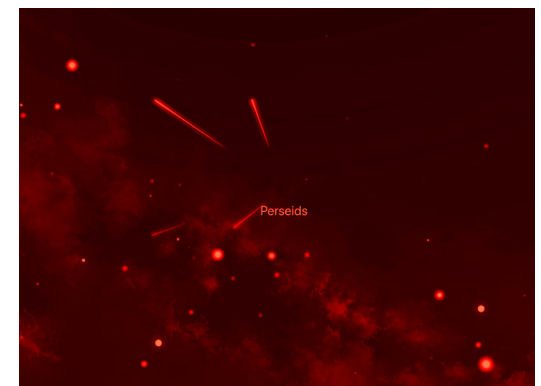
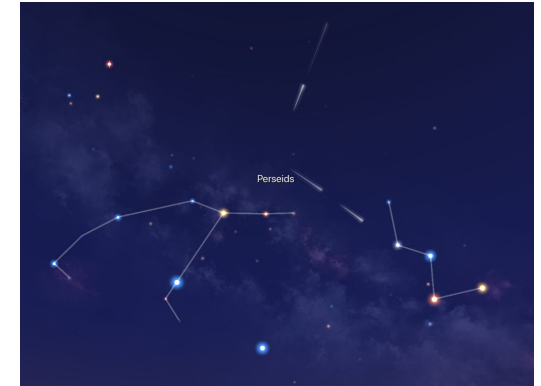
Question: Are there any showers active now, if so what are they called?

- 2 Tap on the name of any shower, this will open an information giving data including the date it occurs.

Question: What is the date of the peak of the Perseid shower?

Tap on the blue Directions box, this will take you to the point in the sky where the meteors radiate from. If the shower isn't active, you will instead see a green box marking this point.

- 3 Meteor showers typically last for days but obviously you can't see them during the daytime. After dark find a place with a clear view of the sky. Meteors appear as very fast streaks across the sky. Let your eyes get adapted to the dark. Use Night Sky to find the direction of the meteor shower (tip: use Night Mode in Preferences to make Night Sky's display red).



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Question: Which of these items do you think would be helpful?

- a) chair b) warm clothing c) clipboard, pens and paper

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During your meteor viewing session you can record data. Here are some important things you could record: your location, the date, time you started and stopped viewing, how many meteors you saw, any usual colors etc

Question: Which of these are not helpful to view meteors (remember you'll need a big area of dark sky)

- a) telescope b) Moonlight c) clouds

Meteors can be seen for a few days either side of the peak of the shower. Use the daily conditions in the Tonight tab to find the best night. Ideally you want a night when the cloud and Moon percentages are both low. However, don't let this put you off, even if it isn't ideal you never know what you might see!

What we have discovered:

- There are regular meteor showers throughout the year
- Meteor showers have a peak date
- The meteors in a shower appear to come from a point in the sky
- You don't need special equipment to view a meteor shower

PERSEIDS

August 22 2015 00:00 UTC

Directions
Meteor shower is not active now

Pronunciation	/ˈpɜːsiːɪdz/	The Perseids /ˈpɜːsiːɪdz/ are prolific meteor showers associated with the comet Swift–Tuttle. The Perseids are so called because the point from which they appear to hail (called the radiant) lies in the constellation Perseus.
Discovery date	36 CE (first record)	
Parent body	Comet Swift–Tuttle	
Constellation	Perseus	
Right ascension	03h 04m	The name is derived in part from the word Perseidai (Greek : Περσεΐδαι), a term found in Greek mythology referring to the sons of Perseus.
Declination	+58°	
Occurs during	July 17 – August 24	

DAILY CONDITIONS

Date	Time	Cloud %	Moon %
19 November	06:51	100%	
	16:55		100%
20 November	06:52	76%	
	16:54		100%
21 November	06:53	44%	
	16:54		98%
22 November	06:55	100%	
	16:53		94%