

Planning a Meteor Shower Viewing Session - Educator's Guide (Ages 8 Upwards)



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

- How to use Night Sky to find a list of annual meteor showers
- How to find the date of a shower's peak
- How to find the radiant of a meteor shower
- The best conditions for seeing meteors

Astronomy background information

Meteor showers occur at regular times throughout the year. A meteor shower can last for weeks but there is a peak when most meteors are seen. Observing sessions should be planned for the peak or a couple of days to either side of it. Night Sky features a list of meteor showers with their dates and other data. Tapping on the Directions button in a shower's information panel will show the position of its origin point, the radiant.

Meteors appear as very fast streaks of light. Their speed means telescopes are not needed to view meteors. The best way to spot meteors is to face the direction of the radiant and scan around the sky. The number of meteors can be unpredictable so prepare to wait patiently for an hour or so. Watching for meteors can be a good opportunity to explore the constellations.

Bright moonlight washes out fainter meteors, so whenever possible viewing sessions should be planned to avoid the full Moon. Night Sky shows the estimated cloud coverage and Moon Phase for the next six days. During the observing session Night Sky's Night Mode should be used to change the screen to a dimmer red color to avoid interfering with dark adaptation.

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
Show Constellation Lines
Meteor Showers

Turn Off these Effects:

Show Satellites
Day Time Effect

Accessible Learning:

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

