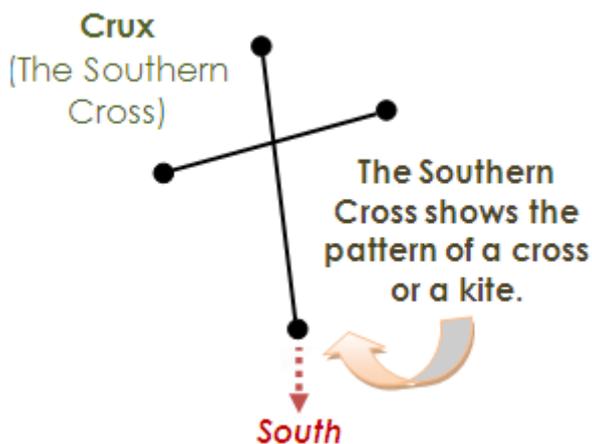


CONSTELLATIONS

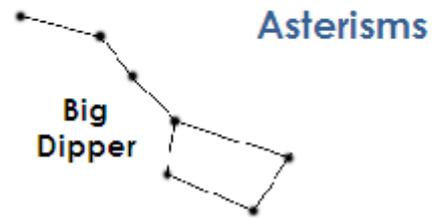
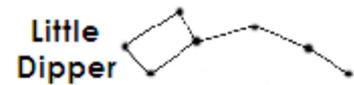
1. A constellation is a **group of stars that form a certain pattern in the sky.**
2. The word "constellation" comes from a Latin term meaning "set with stars."
3. In 1929, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) officially defined 88 constellations across the span of the sky. Formally cementing these boundaries allows astronomers to communicate about the regions of the sky they study.
4. Twenty two different constellation names start with the letter "C."
5. **Hydra** (The Water Snake) is the **largest constellation** (in terms of area) in the sky.



6. **Crux** (The Southern Cross) is the **smallest constellation** in the sky.



7. **Asterisms** are smaller star patterns inside a constellation, these include the 'Big Dipper' falling within the constellation of the Great Bear and 'Little Dipper' found within the Little Bear.

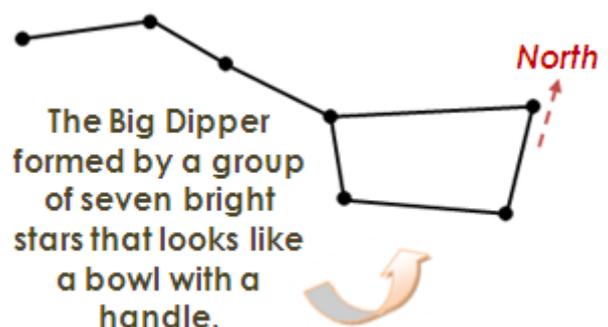


8. **Zodiac** is a group of constellation which can be seen from both hemispheres at different months of the year and consists of 12 constellations which are named after the animals - Aries, Aquarius, Pisces, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius and Capricorn.

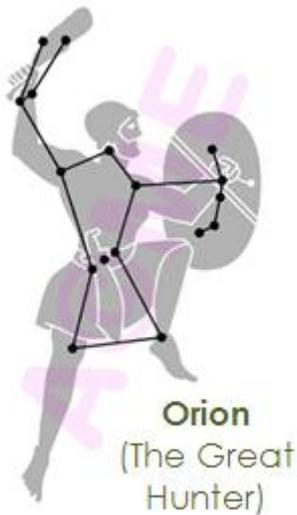
EXAMPLES OF CONSTELLATIONS



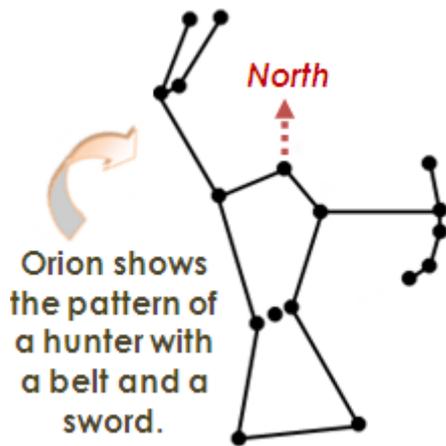
1. Ursa Major is the 3rd largest constellation in the night sky.
2. It can be seen in the northern sky throughout the year.
3. It is widely known for the 'Big Dipper' asterism.



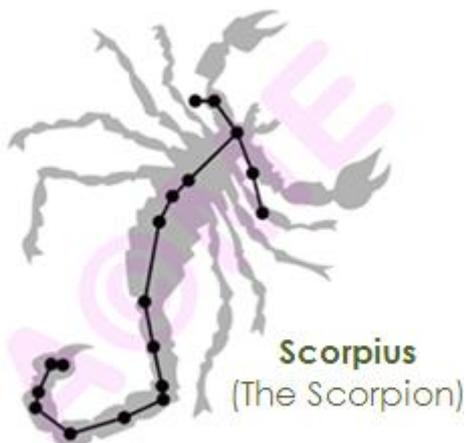
4. Big Dipper is often used as a way to find the direction north.



1. Orion is the master of the winter skies and it can be seen between December to February.

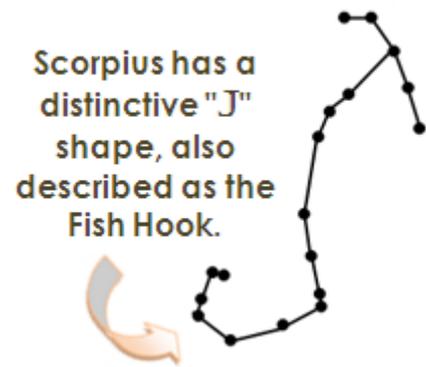


2. One of the features that make Orion so recognizable is its "belt," three stars seemingly arranged diagonally in the sky at the hunter's midsection.
3. Orion is also used as a way to find the direction north.



1. Scorpius is Latin for scorpion or literally translated as the creature with the burning sting.

2. Also known as 'Scorpio' is one of the 12 Zodiac constellations known to man.
3. It can be seen between June to August.



4. To the ancient Greeks, Scorpius was related to the death of the hunter Orion.

USES OF CONSTELLATIONS

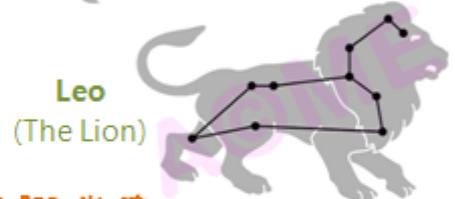
1. To Indicate Time / Season

- a) Depending on where you live, some constellations are visible all year round (circumpolar constellations) and some constellations are seasonal.

Winter



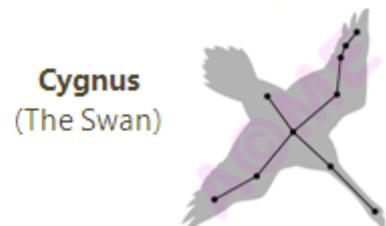
Spring



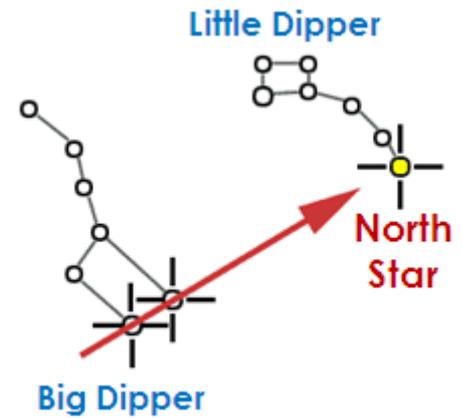
Summer



Autumn



- b) The constellations had uses in ancient times. They were used to help keep track of the calendar. This was very important so that people knew when to plant and harvest crops.



2. To Show Directions

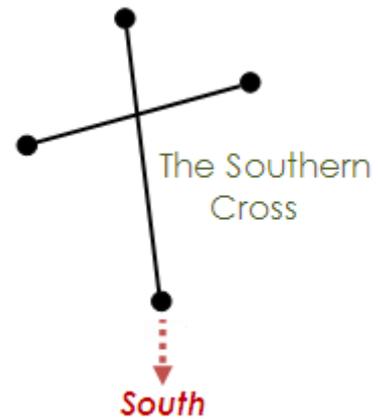
- a) Navigators and early explorers used constellations to help them determine their location during their explorations, either across a desert, or a body of water.



For example, by finding Ursa Minor (Little Dipper) it is fairly easy to spot the North Star (Polaris). Using the height of the North Star in the sky, navigators could figure out their latitude helping ships to travel across the oceans.



- b) The constellations that are often used as guides to directions are the Big Dipper and Orion (for direction of North) and the Southern Cross (for direction of South).



- c) For today's astronomers, constellations refer not so much to the patterns of the stars, but to precisely defined areas of the sky.



3. For astrologists as guides to determine the future (horoscopes).