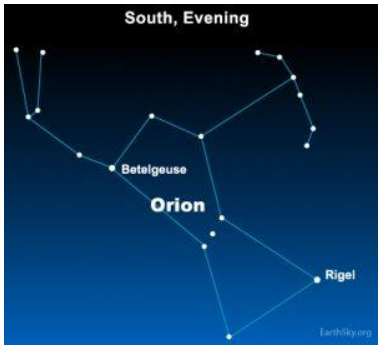
Constellations in the Winter Night Sky
All ages

The Winter night sky has some of the most recognizable constellations, including Orion the hunter, Taurus the bull, and Gemini the twins. Once you have found Orion, you can easily navigate to the Pleiades star cluster, the Dog star Sirius, and many others. Join us as we learn about the stars and planets visible in the Winter Sky, and the science and history behind these objects.



Post lesson discussion questions

1) Name 5 constellations that we can find in the Winter night sky.
2) Which constellation represents the mighty hunter with three stars in his belt?
3) Explain how the constellation of Orion can be used to find other constellations in the night sky.
4) Which star is the brightest star in the night sky? What direction do you look to find it?
5) What will ultimately happen to the star Betelgeuse?
6) Are there any planets visible at night during the Winter this year? Which planet(s)?
7) Why do we see different constellations at night during different seasons?

Post lesson activities

- Have students go on a constellation scavenger hunt. Use one of the sky chart tools below and have students find some of the constellations and other objects discussed in this lesson. Here is one example of a scavenger hunt worksheet: https://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov/club/attachments/Junior_Mtg_2_Night_Sky_Scavenger_Hunt.pdf
- Have students create their own constellation and a story behind it using the Sky Heroes activity sheet: http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/218-sky-heroes-an-activity-reinventing-the-constellations.html
- Make a star finder: https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/starfinder/en/
- Make a big dipper star clock and learn how to tell time using the stars: http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org/astronomy-and-space/216-big-dipper-star-clock.html

Other Resources

Sky and Telescope interactive starchart- https://skyandtelescope.org/interactive-sky-chart/

Printable star map- http://skymaps.com/downloads.html

Sky and Telescope's "This week at a glance"- https://skyandtelescope.org/observing/sky-at-a-glance/

Dr. Valerie Rapson Valerie.Rapson@oneonta.edu