

# The Night Sky

## About constellations

1. Since the time of cave dwellers, and probably before, humans looked at the night sky and saw patterns in the stars.
2. In most parts of the inhabited earth, they realized that as the seasons changed, so did the star patterns in the sky. Humans began to realize they could predict the cycle of the seasons which allowed them to plant crops and predict the movement and behavior of animals.
3. Many ancient cultures used this knowledge. Stories and legends grew around the scientific information as memory devices. Although different groups of people around the world were looking at the same stars, they saw different shapes and patterns. What might have looked like a camel to a man in Arabia might have looked like a bison to a Native American.
4. Nomadic tribes realized they could use the star patterns as a guide for directions from one place to another.
5. Most of the major constellations were used in ancient times. The Greeks, Romans, Chinese and Pacific Islanders used constellations for ocean going navigation. During the 17th century, astronomers mapped more constellations as further points of navigation.
6. Finally astronomers identified 180 constellations by international agreement.

**Teacher's note:** These patterns are meant to be used as supplemental materials complimenting a study of astronomy. Before using the patterns and activities, be sure to investigate telescopes, observatories and the nature of stars. Introduce the concept of the night sky in the northern latitudes as different from the night sky in the southern latitudes.

## Making the Observatory Book:

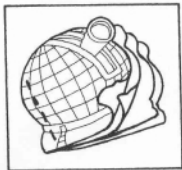
**Materials per child:** 

1. Reproduce the northern and southern skies (pages 57 and 58) on blue paper.
2. Reproduce the observatory (page 59) on white or colored construction paper.
3. Option: provide lined storybook paper.
4. Provide some books about constellations.

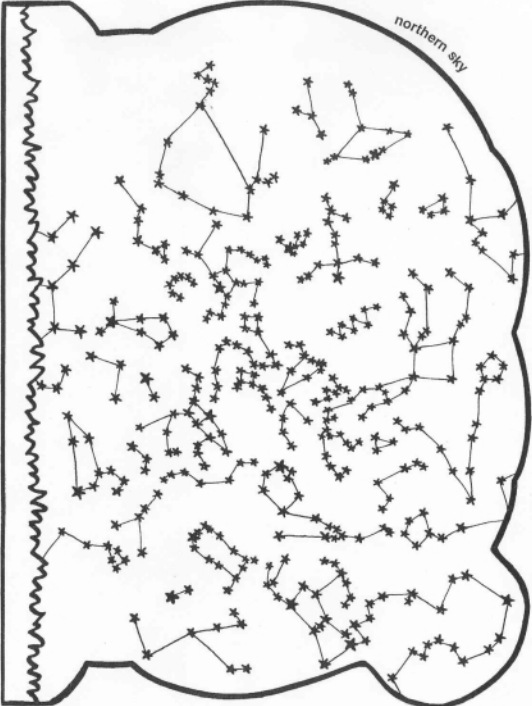


## Instructions:

1. Cut out and color the observatory pattern. Decorate as desired. This is the cover of the book.
2. Instruct the students to place the northern sky and southern sky pages flat on the desk. Which star patterns do they have in common? Which star patterns are different.
3. Instruct the students to identify as many of the constellations as possible. Write the name next to each constellation. Cut out the pages around the dark outline so they match the observatory pattern.
4. Option: place the observatory pattern on the storybook paper. Trace and cut out. Instruct the students to write what they've learned about constellations or perhaps write a story about how a particular constellation got it's name.
5. Stack the pages, place the cover on top and staple on the left as shown.



northern sky



southern sky

