

## LOOKING AT THE STARS

Astronomy is the study of the universe, including the solar system, stars, and galaxies. Constellations are groups of stars that form a pattern. This activity will show you how to find two groups of stars.

### What You Need

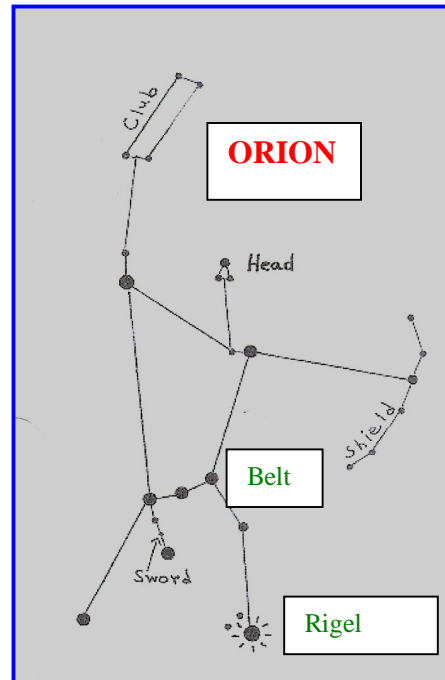
You need this page and a flashlight. It is best to cover the top of the flashlight with plastic wrap held with a rubber band. Use a felt pen and color the plastic wrap red.

**Do this activity with an adult!** It is best to look at the stars on a clear, moonless night. Find an open area without tall trees. Give your eyes a few minutes to get used to the darkness. The red light keeps your eyes adjusted to the darkness.

### Finding Orion the Hunter

This is a winter constellation that is easy to find.

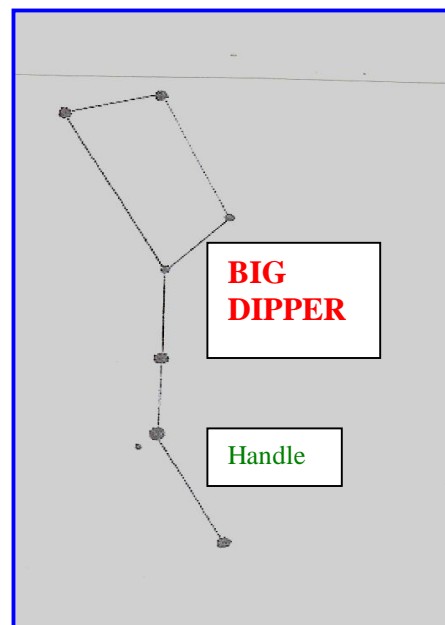
1. Face south. Shine your flashlight to look at Orion on this page.
2. Look up about half way between the horizon and overhead. Look for three bright stars in a row. This is Orion's belt. Can you see his club, head, shield, and sword? The bright star is called Rigel.



### Finding the Big Dipper

The Big Dipper is part of the constellation of the Big Bear. The Big Dipper is visible all year long.

1. Face north. Again, shine your flashlight briefly at this page.
2. During the winter months, the Big Dipper is on its handle as shown.



### On the Internet

Get a free sky map. Go to:

[www.skymaps.com](http://www.skymaps.com)

Click on "Download Now." Then, under the Northern Hemisphere Edition, click on the current month PDF. Print the sky map and follow the instructions printed around it.

### Book

One of the best constellation books for children is *Find the Constellations* by H. A. Rey. He was the coauthor of *Curious George*. Look for it in your library.