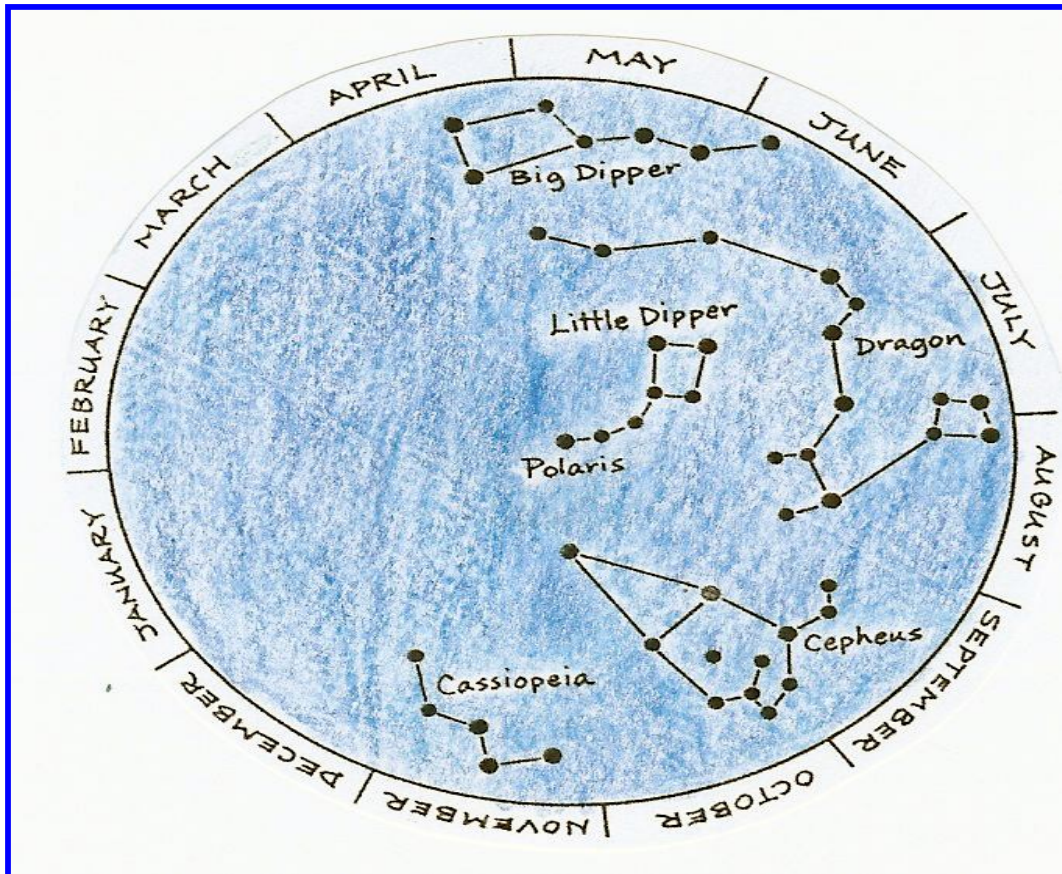


Northern Circumpolar Stars Illustrated by Laurel Aiello

Stars, and groups of stars called constellations, are always interesting to observe. As the Earth revolves around the Sun, some constellations are not always visible. However, the stars in the illustration below are visible all year long from our location on Earth. Why? In the illustration, find the star Polaris at the end of the Little Dipper's handle. Polaris is called the Pole Star or the North Star. If you were at the North Pole and looked overhead, Polaris would be above you. This star appears motionless from Earth. All the stars in the northern sky seem to turn counterclockwise around Polaris. If you ever traveled south of the equator, these stars would not be visible.



How to Use the Star Chart

1. Print this page.
2. Wait for a clear night with few clouds. A moonless night is best.
3. When it is dark, go outside with an adult.
4. Give your eyes a few minutes to get used to the darkness before you try locating the stars. Use a small flashlight if it is too dark to see the chart.
5. Try to observe the stars from a location where there are no large trees, buildings, or streetlights to block your view.
6. Face north. Rotate the star chart so that the current month is at the *top of the chart*. Let's imagine you are observing the stars in July. July will be at the top, January will be at the bottom, October and November will be on the right, and April and May will be on the left.
7. Now look up at the sky. The stars will appear in about the same position as they are in the chart.