



STATEWIDE
STAR PARTY

Draw a Star Picture

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

ncscifest.org/starparty



OBJECTIVE

Draw a star picture (constellation)

SUGGESTED AGE RANGE

Ages 3 and up

ACTIVITY DURATION

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS



- black construction paper, cut into half sheets
- star stickers
- chalk
- Optional: star map or drawings of constellations

MORE RESOURCES

For a kid-friendly explanation of what constellations are, visit <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/constellations/>

To learn more about the origin, names, and pronunciation of constellations, visit <http://www.iau.org/public/themes/constellations/>



BACKGROUND

We often think of constellations as connect-the-dot pictures made out of stars. To astronomers, though, a constellation is an area of the sky with defined boundaries, a bit like how the U.S. is divided into areas called states. Stars in a constellation can lie at many different distances and aren't necessarily related, other than lying in the same direction from Earth. That is, constellations are arbitrary human inventions—not natural groupings of stars. The International Astronomical Union has divided the sky into 88 constellations, which are recognized by the international scientific community, though different cultures have organized the stars in different ways over time.

PREPARATION

1. Consider cutting the star stickers into strips, to help limit access. Otherwise, a few people may use up a lot of the stickers at once.
2. Cut the construction paper into half sheets.
3. Arrange materials on a large table, leaving space for participants to create their constellations. Optional: Display a star map or drawings of constellations to provide inspiration.

PROCEDURE

1. Depending on your participants' ages, you might begin by asking if they've ever looked at the night sky. Have they "connected the dots" of the stars and imagined a picture, or constellation?
2. Invite your participants to create their own constellation or "star picture."
3. Give each participant a half-sheet of black construction paper. Provide (limited) access to the star stickers and chalk.
4. Tell them they can use the stickers to represent stars and the chalk to connect the stars.
5. Encourage participants to use their creativity in creating their star pictures. Maybe they want to make one from a star map, such as Orion. Or they might create a new constellation in honor of a family member or pet. Alternatively, they (or you) could place a few stars at random and then they try to connect them to create a picture.



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