



STATEWIDE STAR PARTY

OBJECTIVE

Design a constellation

SUGGESTED AGE RANGE

Ages 3 and up

ACTIVITY DURATION

5-10 minutes

MATERIALS



These materials are included in the Star Party host kit.

- black construction paper, cut into half sheets
- star stickers
- chalk
- Optional: *Henry's Stars* by David Elliot
- Optional: a Star Party star map

MORE RESOURCES

For a brief explanation of what constellations are (and aren't), visit <http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/questions/question9.html>

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

CREATE A CONSTELLATION

Activity Instructions

<http://www.ncsciencefestival.org/starparty/>

BACKGROUND

Astronomers map the sky using 88 “puzzle pieces” that we know as constellations. To find your way in the sky, it is helpful to know some of these official constellations, although you are certainly welcome to use your imagination and make your own “star pictures.”

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. Arrange materials on a large table, leaving space for participants to create their constellations. Optional: Display a Star Party star map to provide inspiration.

PROCEDURE

1. Optional: Begin by reading aloud *Henry's Stars* by David Elliot. This children's book encourages “connecting the dots” of the stars and imagining pictures, or *constellations*.
2. Invite your participants to create their own constellation or “star picture.” (Note: To astronomers, a constellation is actually an entire area in the sky. Astronomers have divided the sky into 88 constellations that are like puzzle pieces—nothing is left out.)
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 into a constellation, or “star picture.”
5. Encourage participants to use their creativity in creating their star pictures. Maybe they want to make one they know from the 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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