


City Stargazing



Do you ever
look up and
wonder at
the twinkling
stars?

People have always marvelled at the night sky. On a clear night, in a dark place, you can see planets, thousands of stars, and the faint wisps of light that are our galaxy, the Milky Way. The light from towns and cities makes it harder to make out the stars. But that doesn't mean we can't stargaze. Let's explore some constellations in the night sky.

Safety

- Make sure you take an adult outside with you.
- Remember to wrap up warm.

When and where

- Wait until a little after the Sun sets so it's dark enough to see the stars. In summer, you'll have to wait longer for it to be dark enough.
- Pick a spot outside where you can see the most sky, away from streetlights, and without branches or other houses in the way.
- Stand there for a little while and let your eyes get adjusted to the dark.

Pictures in the stars

- When you look at the sky you can make shapes and drawings with the stars, it's like playing connect the dots!
- Astronomers – scientists who study space – have agreed on 88 official star patterns. We call these official patterns “constellations”.



March to June - Virgo

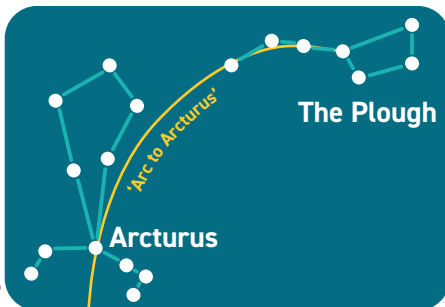
Virgo, the maiden constellation, is visible on dark spring evenings. Its brightest star is Spica.



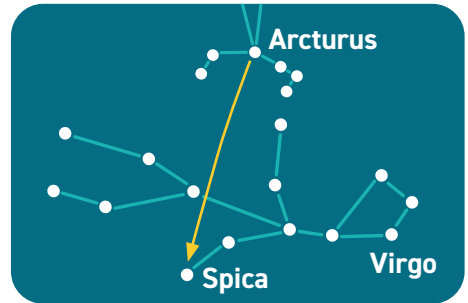
1. To find Virgo, look for this pattern of stars we call the Plough. It will be quite high in the sky during spring and summer. It might be upside down or sideways.



2. Follow the curve of the Plough's handle down to the bright star Arcturus – draw an **arc** to Arcturus!



3. Continue your arc down to Spica, the brightest star in the constellation Virgo. Once you have spotted Spica, try to fill in the rest of the stars that make Virgo.



TOP TIP

Virgo is a spring constellation. If you are struggling to find it, it might help to use a compass and look South.

The Sun being in the constellation Virgo marked the beginning of the wheat harvest in Egyptian mythology, linking Virgo to the wheat grain. This is why Virgo is seen as a maiden holding a wheat sheaf.



The dots don't have to be joined up this way, how else could you join them? Can you make a squid, or a space invader?



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