Life™
SCIENCE FOR ALL

City Stargazing

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

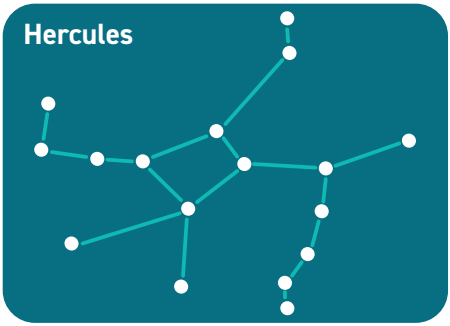
- Wait until a little after the Sun sets so it's dark enough to see the stars. In summer, you'll have to wait longer for it to be dark enough.
- Pick a spot outside where you can see the most sky, away from streetlights, and without branches or other houses in the way.
- Stand there for a little while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

Pictures in the stars

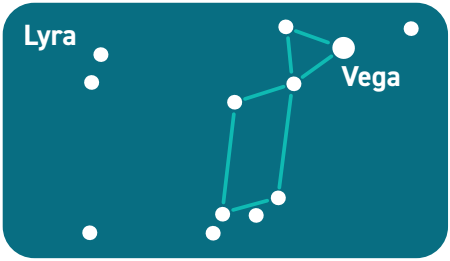
- When you look at the sky you can make shapes and drawings with the stars, it's like playing connect the dots!
- Astronomers – scientists who study space – have agreed on 88 official star patterns. We call these official patterns "constellations".

May to September - Hercules

Hercules, the hero constellation, is visible from March through to September, though it's best observed during the summer months.

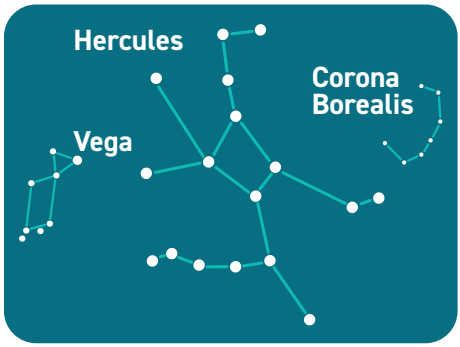


1. To find Hercules, first locate the bright star Vega. It is the second brightest star in Northern skies, and is part of constellation Lyra.

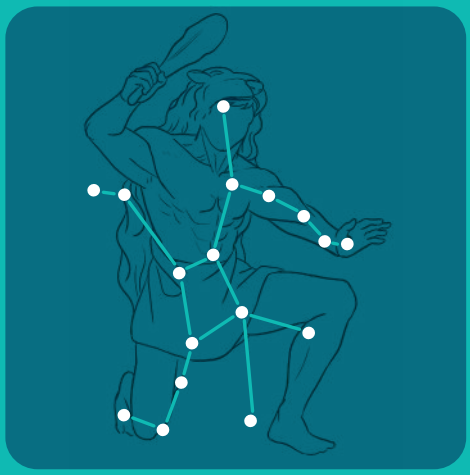


2. Next find this C shaped pattern of bright stars. This is constellation Corona Borealis. Think **C** for **C**orona.

3. Hercules sits between Lyra and Corona Borealis. His body forms an **H** shape - for **H**ercules.



Many cultures recognised this constellation as a heroic figure. For instance, the ancient Greeks linked the constellation with their hero Heracles, and the constellation is also associated with Gilgamesh, a Sumerian hero in a tale thousands of years old.



What do you think the constellation looks like?

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