

# Constellation Cups

**Constellations** are groups of stars that form a pattern. Many people used constellations to tell stories or explain parts of their experience. Since people across the northern hemisphere saw the same stars (people in the southern hemisphere saw different stars), certain groups of stars have multiple stories about them. Today the International Astronomical Union recognizes 88 different constellations in the northern and southern hemisphere.

Some shapes that we think of as constellations are actually called **asterisms** - prominent patterns or groups of stars that have a popular name, but are only part of a constellation. **The Big Dipper** is actually an asterism. It is a distinct pattern of 7 stars within the constellation **Ursa Major** (the Great Bear). Many cultures around the world recognize the Big Dipper, but have different names for it. In the United Kingdom it is called the Plough.

## Materials:

- Paper or styrofoam cup (6oz or larger is best)
- Glue stick
- Push pin
- Flashlight

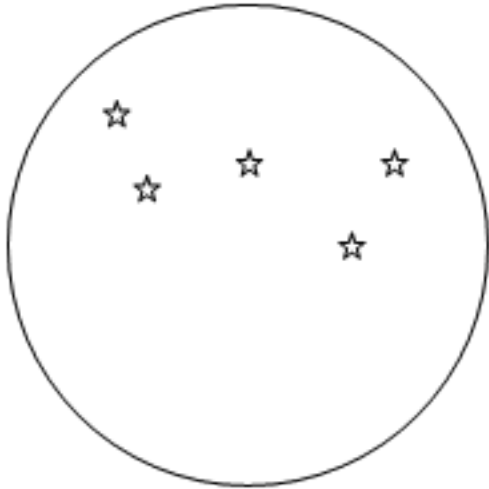


## Try This:

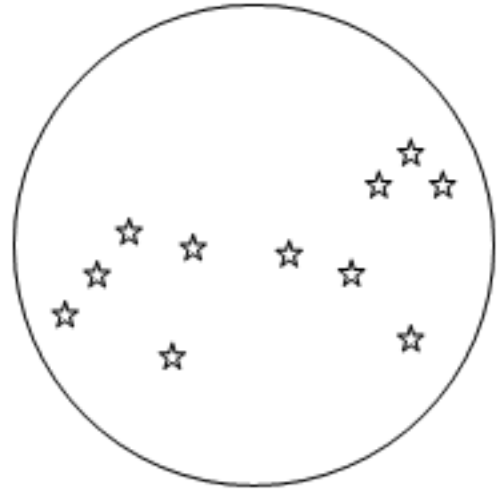
1. Cut out one constellation circle.
2. Glue it to the bottom of a paper cup.
3. Carefully poke holes through each star with a push pin.
4. Label your cup with the name of the constellation or asterism.
5. In a dark room, shine a flashlight into the cup to see the light shine through the holes.  
Try projecting the constellation or asterism onto a wall or ceiling.

## Think About It:

- Do you know any of the stories behind your constellation or asterism? If not, research them!
- Can you create your own story behind your constellation or asterism?
- Can you make up an imaginary constellation and story?



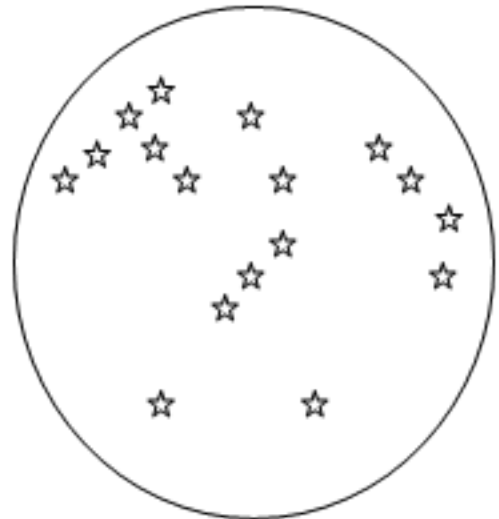
Cassiopeia the Queen



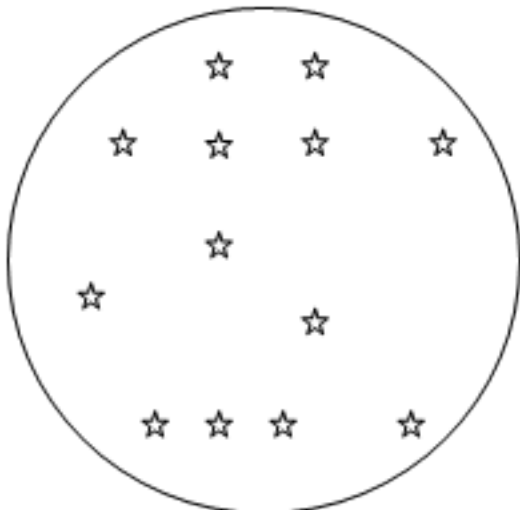
Leo the Lion



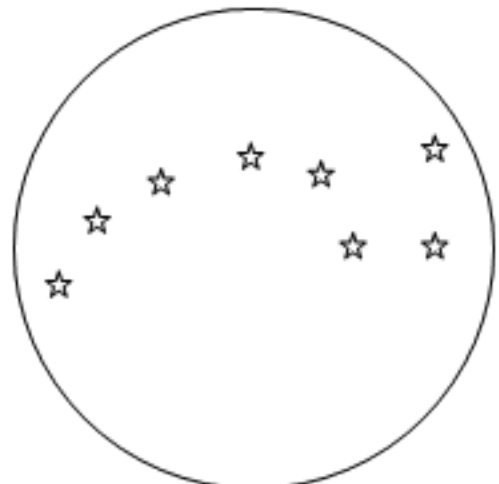
Pegasus the Winged Horse



Orion the Hunter



Gemini the Twins



The Big Dipper