

Constellation Discovery Series:

Orion

Translation: The Hunter

Visibility:

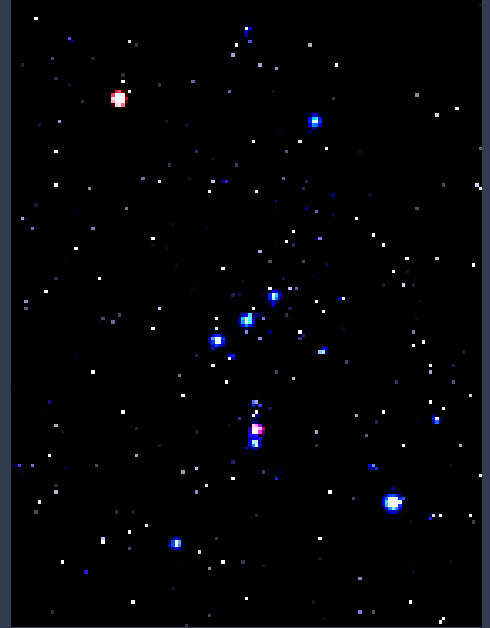
One of the most noticeable constellations. It is located at the celestial equator and is visible throughout the world.

- The part that most people first notice is his belt, which consists of three stars; Alnitak, Alnilam and Mintaka.
- Orion is typically pictured holding a shield or animal on his bent left arm and a club or sword in his extended right arm.
- At different times of the year, different parts of the world can see the full version of Orion. Here in Pennsylvania, Orion is clearly visible in the night sky from November to February.

Additional Facts:

- Orion represents the mythical hunter, who is often depicted in star maps as either facing the charge of Taurus, the bull, or chasing after the hare (constellation Lepus) with his two hunting dogs, represented by the nearby constellations Canis Major and Canis Minor.
- If you find Orion's belt and follow the three stars up and to the right, you will find Taurus the bull.
- If you do the opposite and follow the three stars on Orion's belt down and to the left, you will find one of the brightest stars in our sky, Sirius. This star is considered the collar of the big dog, or Canis Major

Examples:



Myth:

Once while hunting, Orion bragged that he could kill every animal on earth. Mother Earth did not like this plan at all and so she sent a giant scorpion to stop Orion. Orion and the scorpion battled for a long time, but eventually the scorpion was able to stop and defeat Orion. However, Zeus - the king of the Gods - decided to place Orion in the night sky because he needed a great hunter and warrior to keep Taurus the bull at bay. However, to punish Orion, Mother Earth also placed the scorpion into the night sky. The scorpion continues to chase Orion around the night sky to this day.

That is why Orion is seen in the winter sky and Scorpius is seen more clearly in the summer sky. For the ancient Greeks, who also lived in the northern hemisphere, this story would explain why he would disappear and reappear during the year.