

SECTION 14: STARS, CONSTELLATIONS, AND GALAXIES

Words to Know:

Asterism (as' tuh riz uhm): An asterism is a prominent pattern of or group of stars which is smaller than a constellation.

Betelgeuse (beet' uhl jooz): Betelgeuse is a supergiant star at the top of the constellation Orion (oh rye' uhn).

Big Dipper: The Big Dipper is a prominent group of seven stars in the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear, containing the pointers that indicate the direction to Polaris.

Black hole: A region of space having a gravitational field so intense that no matter or radiation can escape.

Galaxy: A galaxy is a group of millions or billions of stars, together with gas and dust, held together by gravitational pull.

Nebula (neb' yuh luh): A nebula is a cloud of gas and dust in space.

Proxima Centauri (Prox' ih muh) (sen tor' ee): Proxima Centauri is the closet star to Earth.

Sirius (seer 'ee us): Sirius is the brightest star in our night sky.

Supernova: A supernova is a star that suddenly increases greatly in brightness because of a catastrophic explosion that ejects most of its mass. It is sometimes called an exploding star.

Fascinating Facts about Stars, Constellations, and Galaxies

Directions:

1. Read the fact.
2. Write the fact.
3. Make sure your letters are the same shapes and sizes as the examples.
4. Read the fact again.

Many stars come in pairs called
binary stars, and there are some
groupings with up to four stars.

The North Pole always points to the North Star. The North Star is also known as Polaris.

Constellations are used to help us identify where stars, planets, and other celestial objects are located.

Polaris is a part of a group of stars, called the Little Dipper, which is part of the constellation Ursa Minor.

The Little Dipper is always present in the night sky of the Northern Hemisphere.

Sirius is the brightest star in our night sky.

Sirius is sometimes called the "Dog Star" because it is part of the constellation Canis Major.

Betelgeuse is a supergiant star at the top of the constellation Orion.

The closest star to Earth is called Proxima Centauri.

We live in the galaxy called the Milky Way.

The Milky Way is a spiral shaped