

# DESIGN

## YOUR OWN CONSTELLATION

As long as people have been looking up at the night sky, they have been creating pictures in the stars.



Not all the images we see in the sky are constellations. Asterisms are familiar modern images, like a triangle or teapot, that we can easily spot in the night sky, but are not a constellation. The Big Dipper is the best-known asterism in the sky. Most people who look at these seven stars see a spoon or ladle. That is how it got the name, the Big Dipper.

A constellation is one of 88 images in the sky, as defined by the International Astronomical Union. Constellations can be animals, people, objects, or make-believe creatures.



The official constellations come from Greek/Roman mythology or were created during the Age of Discovery from the 15th to 17th century as Europeans began to explore the globe.

The Big Dipper is a small part of the larger constellation, Ursa Major, which includes several additional dimmer stars to create the figure. Astronomers also added a boundary box around each of the constellations.

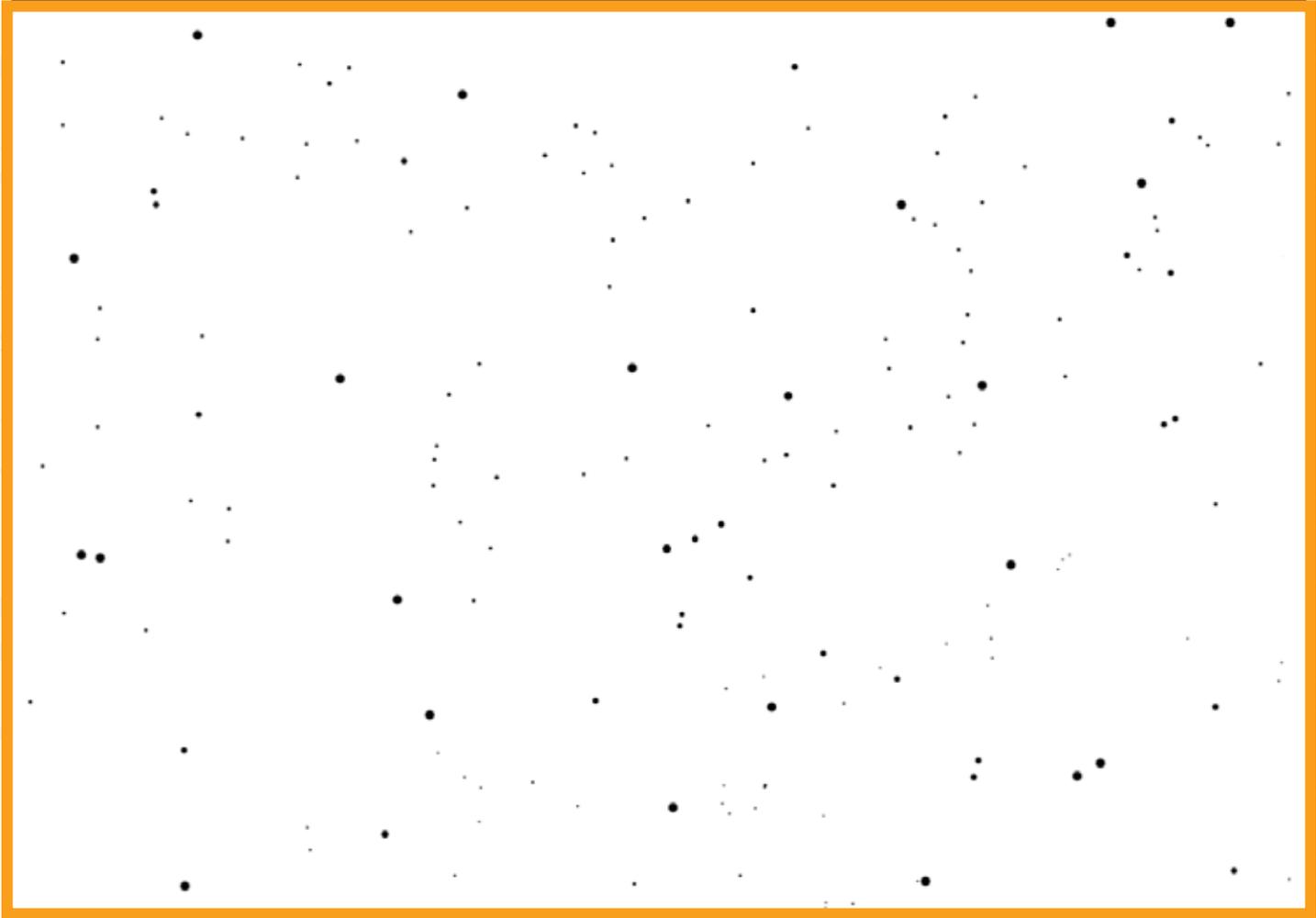
These boundary boxes link up like a jigsaw puzzle to cover the entire sky. Every object in the night sky falls into one of these boundary boxes. This makes it easier for astronomers to find objects in the sky by referring to their constellation location.

Historically, different cultures saw this grouping of stars and told stories about it. Many thought it looked like a bear. Ursa Major is a Latin phrase with Ursa meaning “bear” and Major meaning “larger or greater”.

Ursa Major is the “Great” Bear of the northern sky. Ursa Major makes a slow circle in the northern sky throughout the year and never sets. It is visible every night here in Pennsylvania. To see it, all you need to do is look North.



Like a game of connect the dots, draw your own constellation and tell a story about it.



*My constellation is* \_\_\_\_\_

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