

Name: _____

Date: _____

Outdoor Laboratory: Constellations

Introduction

Constellations serve as guideposts to the sky and are part of cultural history. Since ancient times, sailors and nomads alike have used the constellations and bright stars for navigation. Even with the advent of GPS technology, stars and constellations serve as aids for navigation at night.

Tonight, you will learn to identify the constellations and bright stars that are currently above the horizon using the SFA star charts. While there are a number of smartphone apps that help identify objects in the sky, it is more important to learn how to reckon what you see on a chart to the same object in the night sky. Drawing objects improves retention and trains the eye to detect faint light in the sky.

Procedure

1. Determine the location of each horizon (N, E, S, W) with respect to your observing location.
2. Use your star charts to identify as many constellations and bright stars in the night sky as you can. Draw and label each constellation found with respect to the horizon using the drawings below.
3. Be sure to sketch the positions of any trees or structures or other obstructions that impede your view of the sky.







