



Background information:

This activity is great for developing young children's curiosity about the solar system, part of the **science and technology** curriculum. They will develop observational skills and if they repeat this activity over time, they can start to notice patterns, changes in the sky over the course of a moon cycle, for example.

Being outside in the dark is exciting for children and develops their sense of wonder, inquiry and imagination. Perhaps they could tell stories about the constellations they find, research why constellations were important for navigation or write a story about a spaceman's adventures.



Equipment

Stars are best viewed in the dark so this activity is for once the sun has gone down. Head out into your garden on a dark night with a blanket to lie down on or, try turning off all the lights in your house and opening your windows to look up at the sky. Pick a side of the house with the least light pollution from street lamps.

The stars are brightest on a clear night, when the moon is thin, so check out the size of the moon over a week or so and decide when is best to spot the stars.

Activity

- Look up at the night sky and let your eyes adjust to the darkness
- What can you see?
- Can you see the moon? If it is full you might be able to see the craters on it's surface
- Can you see any moving lights? These could be satellites or the International Space Station
- You could download a star constellation app which will help you to identify which star patterns (called constellations) you can see in the sky above you.
- Some of the stars you can see might actually be planets, you can try to tell the difference by looking whether the light is twinkling or not, if it twinkles, it's likely a star.
- Can you spot the brightest star in the sky?