

KIDS' CORNER

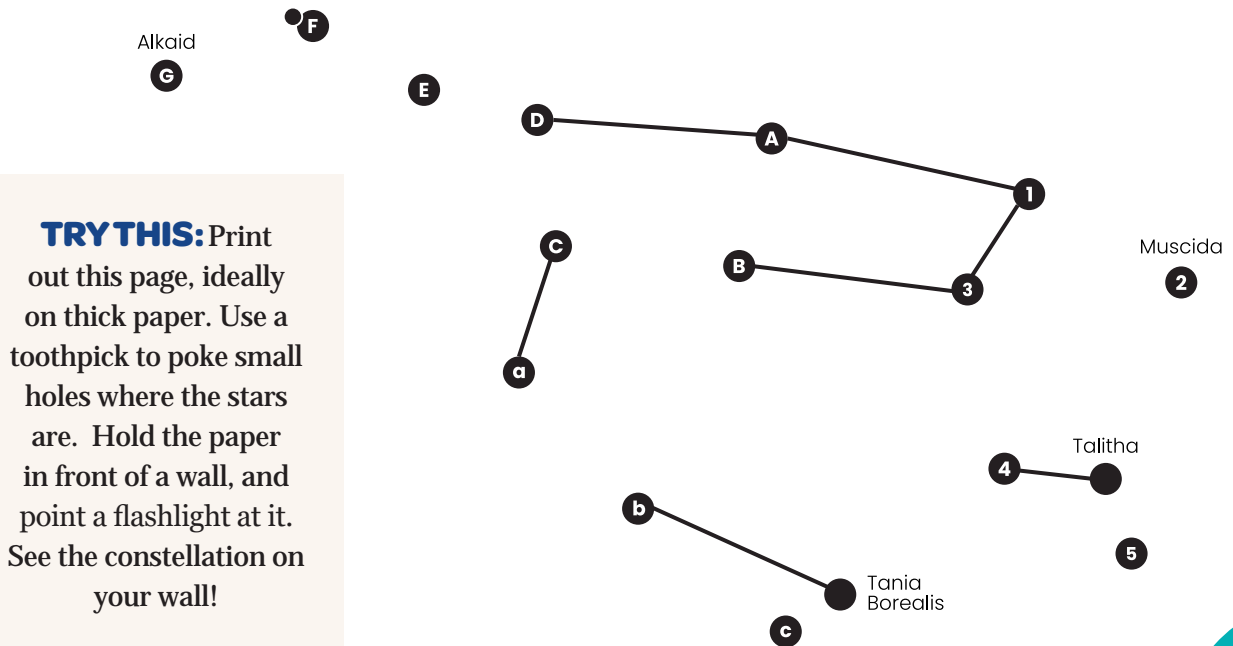
NATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY IS MAY 15

A **constellation** is a cluster of stars which make up an outline or pattern in the night sky.

Ursa Major is the 3rd largest constellation in the sky. For thousands of years, various peoples have thought that these stars formed the shape of a bear. Ursa Major means “Great Bear” in Latin.

CONNECT THE STAR DOTS TO CREATE URSA MAJOR

Can you imagine a bear in these stars? Muscida is the bear's nose, Talitha and Tania Borealis are two of the paws, and the tail ends in Alkaid. The Big Dipper is part of this constellation. The dipper's handle is the bear's tail.



ANCIENT STORIES ABOUT URSA MAJOR

In Greek mythology, the god Zeus fell in love with Callisto, which made Zeus' wife, Hera very angry. To punish Callisto, Hera turned her into a bear. Zeus, wanting to protect Callisto from hunters, grabbed her by the tail and flung her into the sky.

Some Native American peoples saw just the Big Dipper as a bear. They believed the three stars of the dipper's handle were the hunters chasing the bear. As the bear neared the horizon in the autumn evening sky, the hunters caught it. Its blood then turned the fall leaves red.