

# Stars







All stars are made of  
large balls of gases

## What is a Star?

When the sky gets dark, stars can be seen. Stars are large balls of gas in space. The gas that makes up stars gives off heat and light. The heat and light are the same as the heat and light that the sun gives off. That is because the Sun is a star.

Stars are much larger than Earth. For example, the Sun is 100 times larger than Earth. In Space, there are many stars even larger than the Sun.

### Key Notes:

Why is the Sun a star?

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Away from the city,  
stars in the Milky Way  
are clear and bright.

## Stars at Night

Because the Sun is the nearest star to Earth, it blocks the light of other stars during the day. At night, people can see many of these stars. On clear and dark nights in North America, some stars can always be seen. One of these stars is the North Star.

To see large numbers of stars, people have to be far from the bright lights of cities. Then, people can see as many as 2,000 stars at night.

### Key Notes:

Where can people see large numbers of stars?

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This photo shows a star pattern called the Dragon.

## Star Patterns

Long ago, people saw patterns in the stars in the night sky. Many star patterns looked like animals or people. One star pattern looked like a great bear.

People began to tell stories about the star patterns they saw. They told these stories to their children. Their children later told the stories to their children.

Many of the names that people of long ago gave to these star patterns are still used today. One star pattern is called Great Bear.

### Key Notes:

How did children learn stories about star patterns?

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A shooting star  
streaks across the sky.

## Shooting Stars

Sometimes it looks like a star is falling very fast in the night sky. People call this a shooting star. However, shooting stars are not stars at all.

What people call a shooting star is really a rock in space that is falling toward Earth. The white line that people see is the space rock as it burns up in the air around Earth. These falling space rocks can be as small as dust or as big as a car.

### Key Notes:

In this reading, what does shooting mean?

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