CONSTELLATIONS
How do we locate the stars?

Zenith = point directly over head
(90.0 Degrees)

Horizon = Edge of the sky And ground
(0 Degrees)

You are here
Constellation
Comparison of Star Sizes
Many of the stars form specific patterns, or constellations.

How many named constellations are there??

88

Who created the constellations?

Farmers who used them to tell the seasons for harvest purposes.

Sumerians and Babylonians possibly created them…made their way to Egypt where Greeks found out about them.
What is an asterism??

An asterism is any pattern formed by a group of stars that is not one of the official constellations. Usually an asterism is part of a larger constellation.

Big Dipper    Little Dipper    Northern Cross

Big Dipper    Ursa Major
Does everyone see the same thing??

No....
Let’s use the Big Dipper (part of the Ursa Major)
  British call it a plough
  Southern France – saucepan
  Skidi Pawnee – stretcher with a sick man
  Ancient Maya – Seven Macaw
  Hindu – Wise Men
  Egyptians – thigh and leg of a bull
  Chinese – special chariot for Emperor
  Micmac Indians of Canada – bowl of Dipper was a bear
and stars in handle was hunters
  Runaway slaves – Drinking Gourd
Circumpolar Constellations
Some of these never go below the horizon. Instead, they appear to circle **Polaris** (also called the **North Star** or the **Pole Star**), over the course of a night.

This is about a ten hour time exposure of the northern sky. The arcs are the paths of the stars circling the North Star (Polaris) in the center.

These stars can be seen year-round in the northern sky although their exact location each night will vary throughout the year.
Other stars appear to move throughout the night from east to west.

These are trails of stars that are further to the south in our night sky. Their trails appear almost straight.

The constellations and the stars that make them up also appear in different locations throughout the year.