

Starquest Syllabus

Summary

For ages, people all over the world have tried to make sense of the sky. In this unit, choose a celestial body or constellation, and study how it has been explained and interpreted across time. Complete the following tasks, and present all work in a disk portfolio.

Materials

- Computer with Internet connection
- Reference books
- Slideshow presentation or desktop publishing software
- Art supplies
- Materials for a dramatic sketch

Tasks to Be Completed and Organized on Disk Portfolio

1. Develop a constellation pattern, and write a myth or story about it. Use the constellation story rubric to plan and assess.
2. Research and answer important questions about the past and future of astronomy.
3. Choose a celestial body in a constellation, research it, and create a presentation, newsletter, or wiki. Your product should show what you learned about modern scientific understanding as well as the associated mythology and folklore. See the scoring guide for requirements.
4. Develop a dramatization for one of the explanations associated with the constellation (past, present, or future). Use the dramatization rubric to plan and assess.

Other Requirements

- Participation in class discussions and debates
- Completion of peer and self-assessments

Optional Projects

- Chart or list the celestial objects that would have appeared to the ancient Egyptian, Anasazi, Chinese, or other culture of your choice. Explain why certain constellations are not visible from certain locations on Earth, or why some different constellations were visible to earlier cultures in the same location.
- Many of the cultural interpretations relate to the views from the Northern Hemisphere. See what you can find out about the Southern Hemisphere and how the southern portion of the sky was viewed in ancient times.
- Study an astronomical topic, such as auroras, telescopes, comets (Halley, Shoemaker-Levy 9, Hale-Bopp), meteors (Leonids, Perseids, Barringer Meteor Crater, Tunguska), natural satellites, asteroids, Saturn's rings, Jupiter's great red spot, sunspots, multiple stars, variable stars, supernova, the Milky Way, other galaxies, or another topic of interest to you.

Checklist

Please check the appropriate box after you complete each task:

- Developed a constellation pattern
- Wrote a myth or story about my constellation pattern
- Conducted research and answered questions about astronomy
- Chose a celestial body and conducted research

- Created a presentation, newsletter, or wiki to inform others about the celestial body that includes:
 - Modern scientific understanding
 - Mythology and folklore
 - Future of the constellation
 - Drawing of star chart for the present and in 20 years
- Developed dramatization for one explanation of the constellation
- Did an optional project