

A wide-angle photograph of a clear night sky. The Milky Way galaxy is visible as a dense band of stars and cosmic dust stretching across the upper two-thirds of the frame. The stars appear as small, bright points of light. At the bottom of the image, a dark silhouette of the horizon is visible, with a line of warm, yellowish-orange lights representing a city or town at night.

The Value of the Night Sky

The Night Sky is a view into the universe beyond planet Earth. As the origin of many scientific discoveries, cultural practices, and religious beliefs, the night sky has been, and will continue to be, a very valuable window to outer space.



In many cultures, people thought that the Gods lived above, in the heavens. They believed that the positions of the stars were their **God's way of telling stories**. So it seemed natural to recognize patterns in the sky, give them names, and tell stories about them.

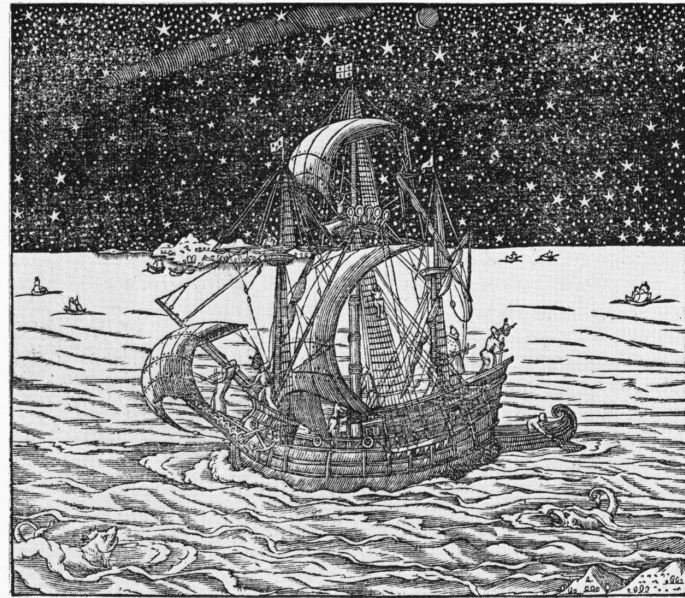
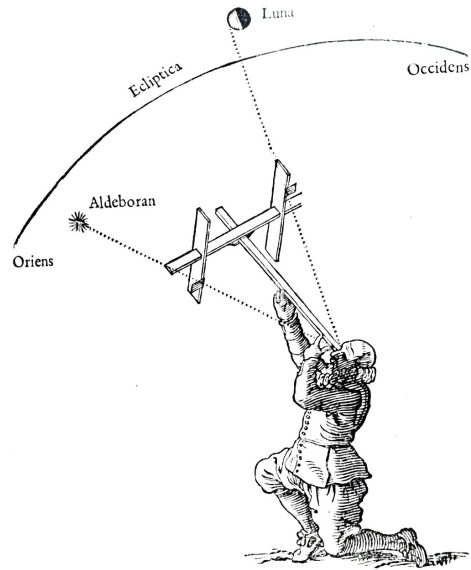


Greek Mythological Zodiac

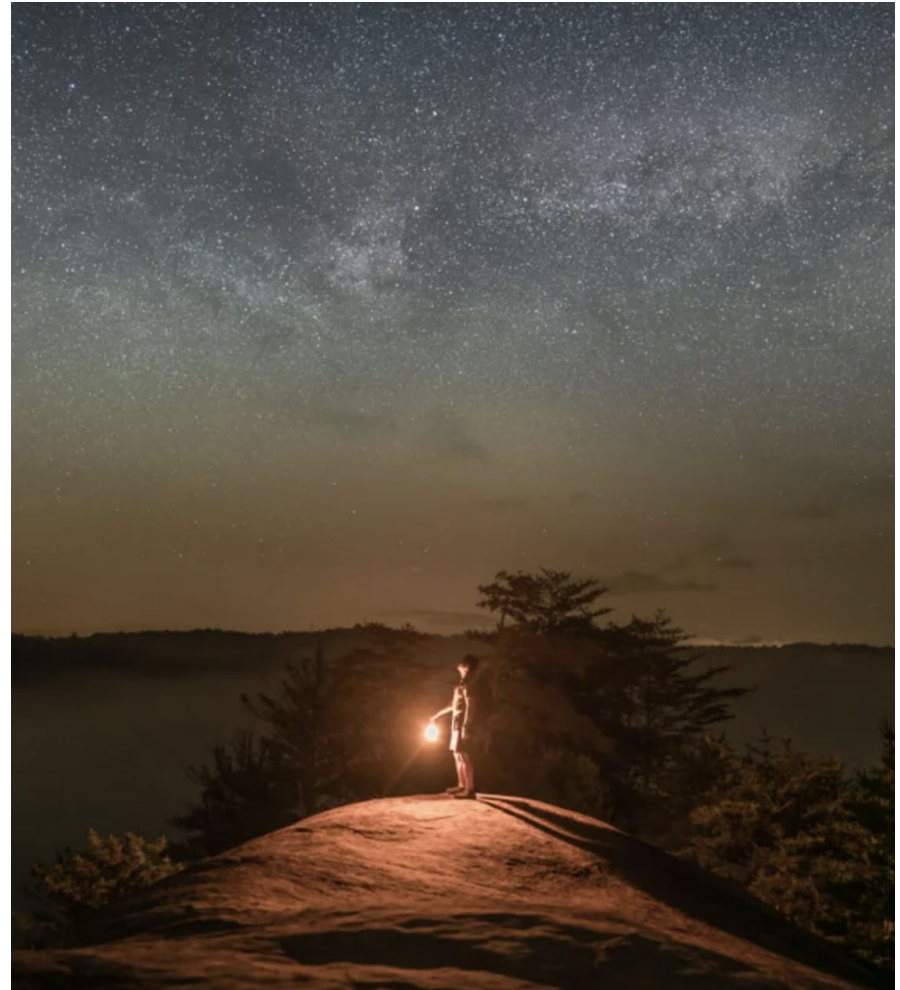


Chinese Animal Zodiac

Before modern technology, sailors used the stars for **Navigation**. Stars move across the sky from east to west. Sailors determine their direction by watching the movement of the stars the same way they watched the sun's movement. Location could be determined with geometry.

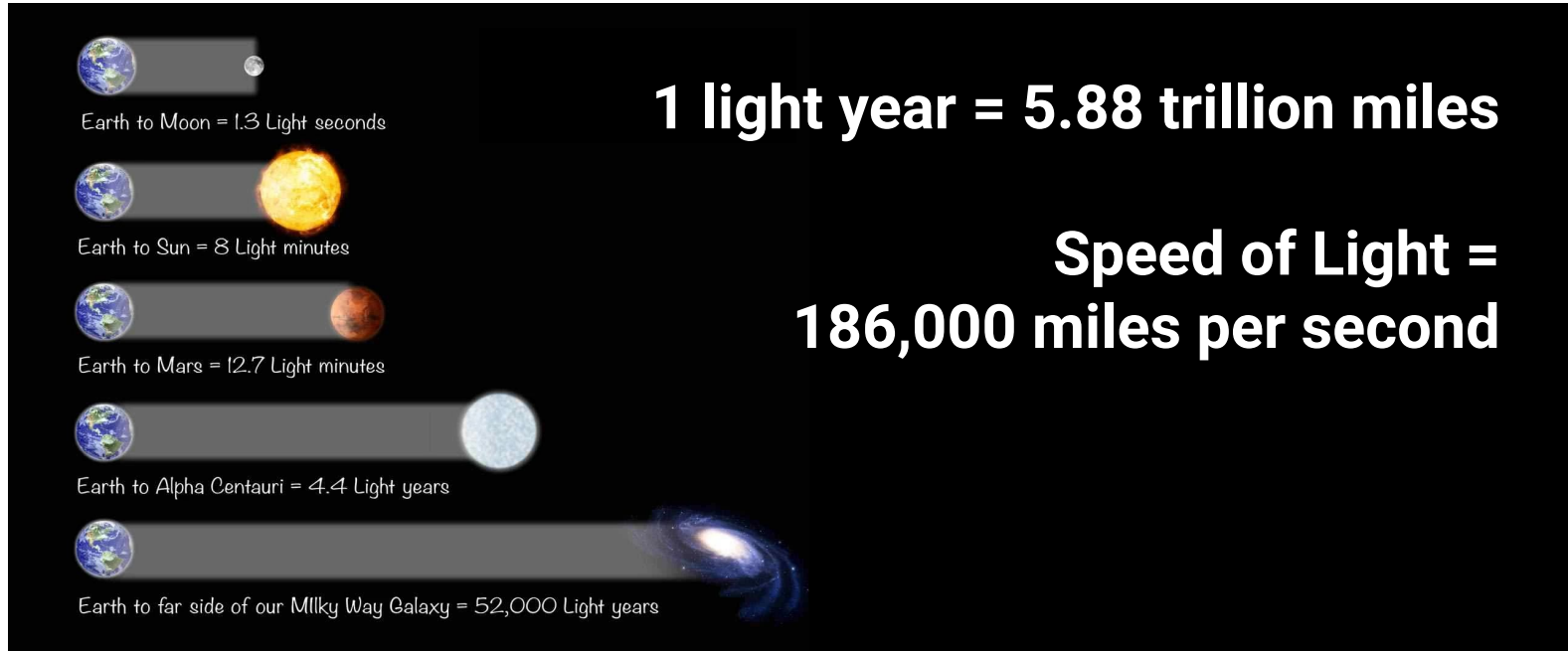


Experiencing the night sky provides **perspective, inspiration**, and leads us to reflect on our **humanity** and place in the universe. The history of scientific discovery and even **human curiosity** itself is indebted to the natural night sky.



**When was the last time
you were outside at night
and able to see stars?**

Sirius is the brightest star in the night sky. At 8.6 light years away, it's also one of the closest to Earth. But think about this: It takes **8.6 years** for the light from Sirius to reach Earth. That means when you look at Sirius, you are seeing light that's 8.6 years old. You're looking back in time!



Magnitude, in astronomy, measure of the **brightness** of a star or other celestial body. The brighter the object, the lower the number assigned as a magnitude.

★	MAGNITUDE -1	≈ 1 STAR
★	MAGNITUDE 0	≈ 3 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +1	≈ 8 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +2	≈ 35 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +3	≈ 120 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +4	≈ 360 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +5	≈ 1100 STARS
★	MAGNITUDE +6	≈ 3500 STARS
	MAGNITUDE +7 AND >	NOT VISIBLE
<hr/>		
	TOTAL VISIBLE	≈ 5100 STARS



SUN = MAGNITUDE -26



FULL MOON = MAGNITUDE -12.5



BRIGHT



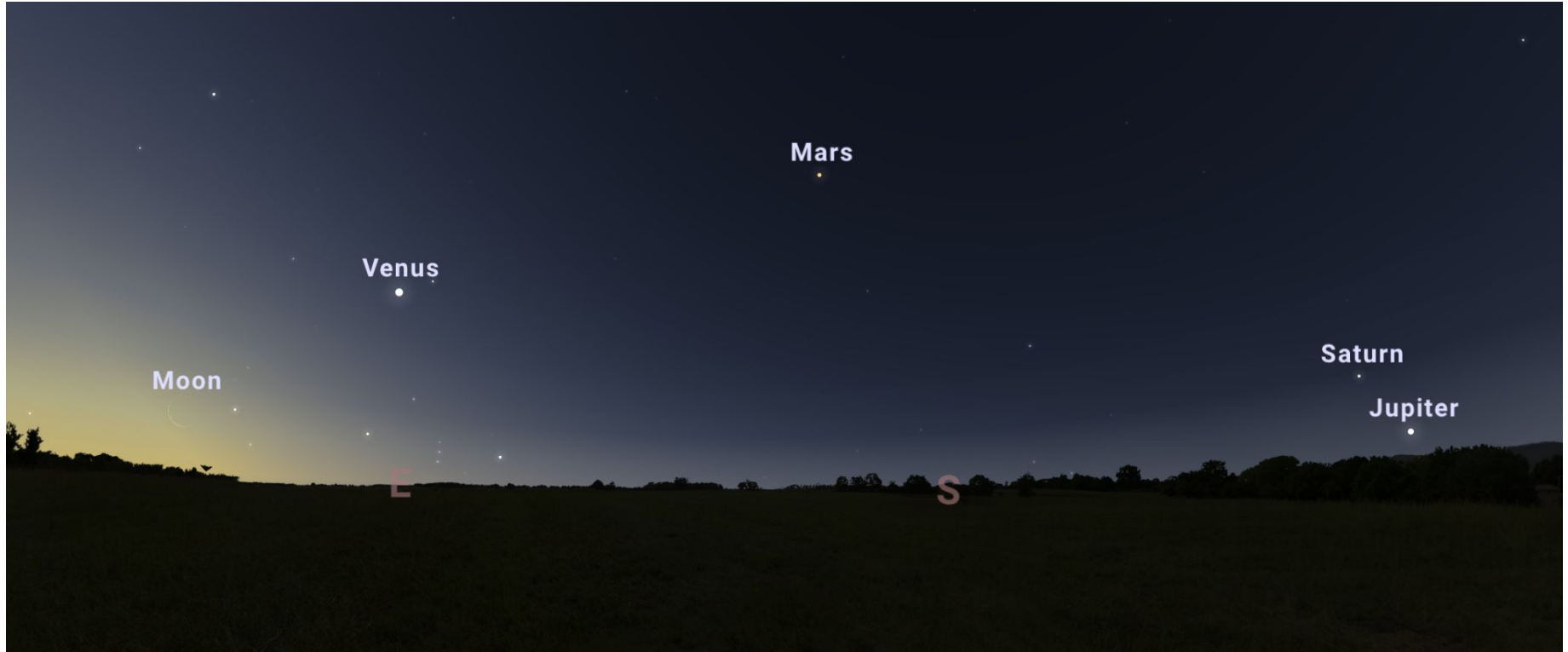
AVERAGE



DIM



Some of the brightest visible stars, are not stars at all. Instead they are **planets** in our solar system. The five most visible planets are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.



**What is the most memorable
moment you have had
looking up at the sky?**