

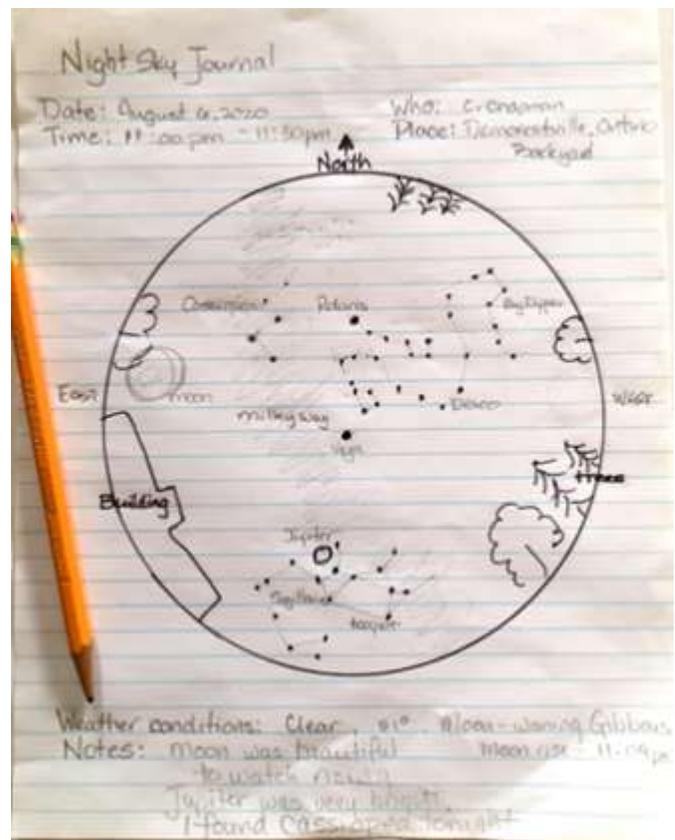
# Keep a Night Sky Journal

9 & up

Head out into the night regularly and record the movements of the cosmos. All you need are a notebook, pencil, flashlight, and compass. To protect your night vision, cover the lens of your flashlight with a red filter. Secure red cellophane or stretch a red balloon over the lens. After several journal entries you will easily see the journey of the stars and planets across the sky.

## Some tips:

1. Use a pencil. This will make it easier to adjust the position of stars.
2. Draw a circle that's at least 15 centimeters across in your journal. This represents the horizon on all sides. The very centre of the circle is the top of the sky directly over head (the zenith).
3. Use the compass to determine north. Mark it on the circle's edge, usually the top. East and west will appear reversed because you are mapping the sky overhead. You read a sky map or chart by holding it over your head and lineup the directions.
4. Draw in some landmarks you see along the horizon, such as trees and buildings. This helps you to keep track of which way you're looking. It also helps when comparing observations from one day to the next.
5. Look straight up. Record what you see in the middle of the circle. Use little circles or dots to mark the stars. Larger dots can indicate brighter stars.
6. Make a note of the date, time, and who made the observations with you. Later, this information helps you identify what you saw.
7. Jot down the weather conditions, the place, and any notes about what you noticed about the sky that night.



**Tip:** If you are just getting started looking at the stars see our *Night Sky* activity for tips and ideas.

The following website can help you plan your outings. It gives detailed information about which planets are visible, where they are in the sky and at what times.

<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/night/canada/toronto>

