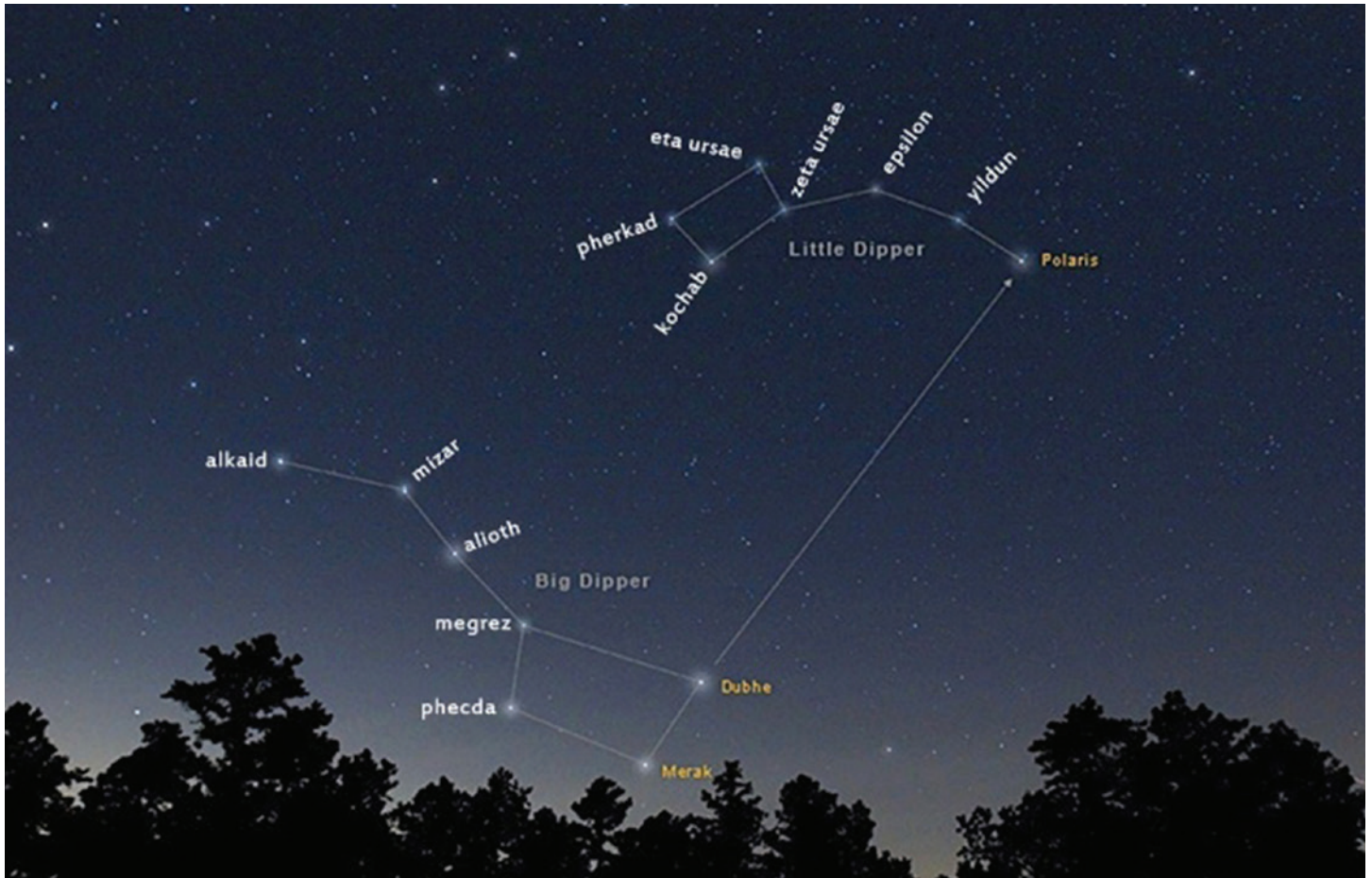


STUDENT PAGE

Astronomy Lesson 1: One Sky, Many Stories



CONSTELLATION/STAR	JAPANESE	GREEK	BLACKFEET	CROW
Big Dipper/Polaris	The One Star & Big Dipper	Ursa Minor	Fixed Star	The Seven Bulls

CONSTELLATIONS

The history of the constellations is ancient; many were likely created by the Babylonian, Egyptian and Assyrian peoples. These constellations would have moved through the regions via trade, and eventually they made their way into Greece, where they were assimilated into the culture and mythology. In the second century, Ptolemy organized

48 constellations in his famous book "Almagest". These are called the "Ptolemaic constellations," and most of them survive to this day.

There are 88 official constellations recognized by the International Astronomical Union. Only the official boundaries of these constellations are determined; there is no official line drawing that makes up the shape of any constellation.

Image courtesy wikihow

STUDENT PAGE

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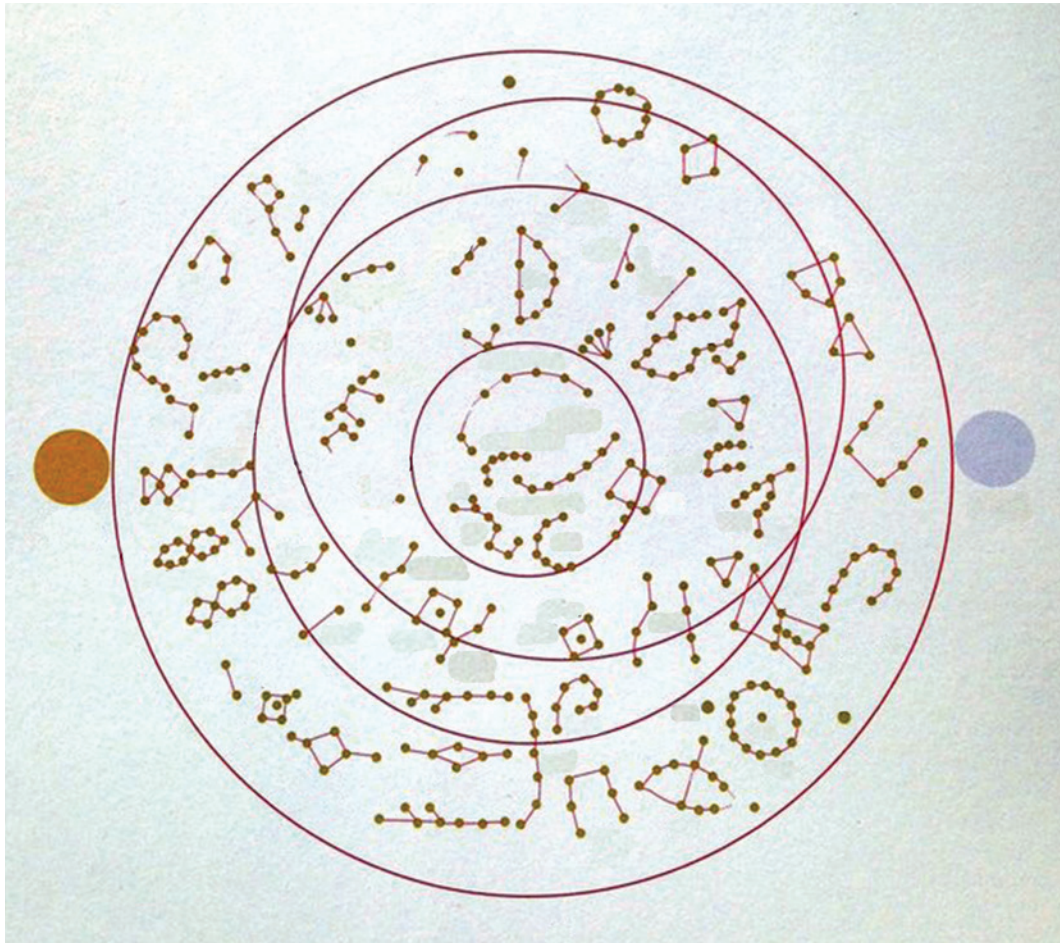


Image courtesy Wikipedia

Star chart, Kitora Tomb, Asuka, Japan (7th century)

In 1998, a star map was discovered in the Kitora Tomb in the Asuka village in Japan. Dating back to the late seventh, early eighth century, this star chart is the oldest existing map of its kind in the world. It features 68 constellations and the movement of celestial objects is represented by the three concentric circles in the chart. The polar star is featured in the center.

Cultures all over the world have created star stories based on constellations to pass traditions and knowledge on to the next generation. Each culture had different names and stories for the Sun and Moon, visible planets, stars, and star groups. These stories are told at night and during the time of year when the featured constellation is in the night sky. In American Indian cultures, stories are told during the winter-time, when the nights are long and cold. Many of the stories endure today as they are passed down to new generations.