Name: _____ Date: _____

The Star That Stays Put in the North

Circle group

Most stars seem to move across the sky at night. One star does not. It is called Polaris. Some people call it the North Star. It stays in the same spot in the north.

Why does it stay still? Earth spins like a top. The line Earth spins on points close to Polaris. So Polaris does not move much. The other stars seem to turn around it.

Long ago, people used Polaris to find north. If they could see it, they knew where north was. Then they knew the other ways too.

The Big Dipper can help you find Polaris. Find the two stars at the end of the bowl. Draw a line through them. It points to Polaris. People in the north can see this star. People far south cannot.

Questions

1. What is another name for Polaris?

_____

_____

2. Why does Polaris stay in the same spot?

_____

_____

3. What did people long ago use Polaris for?

_____

_____

4. What group of stars helps you find Polaris?

_____

_____

5. Who cannot see Polaris?

_____

_____

6. Why would a lost traveler want to see Polaris?

_____

_____

Words to know

Polaris: the star that stays in the north part of the sky
spins: turns around and around
Dipper: a group of stars shaped like a big spoon
bowl: the round, deep part of a spoon

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Star That Stays Put in the North

Triangle group

Most stars seem to travel across the sky during the night. One star does not. It is called Polaris, or the North Star. It stays in almost the same spot, high above the north.

Why does it stay still? Earth spins like a top. The line that Earth spins around points very close to Polaris. So the star does not move around the sky like the others do. All the other stars seem to turn around it.

Long ago, travelers used Polaris to find north. If they could see the star, they knew which way was north. Then they could work out east, west and south too. It helped people on land and on the sea.

You can find Polaris with the help of the Big Dipper. Look at the two stars at the end of the Dipper's bowl. Draw a line through them, and the line leads toward Polaris. People in the northern half of Earth can see this star. People far to the south cannot.

Questions

1. What is another name for Polaris?

_____

_____

2. Why does Polaris stay in almost the same spot?

_____

_____

3. What did travelers long ago use Polaris for?

_____

_____

4. Which group of stars can help you find Polaris?

_____

_____

5. Who cannot see Polaris?

_____

_____

6. Why would a lost traveler at night want to see Polaris?

_____

_____

Words to know

Polaris: the star that stays in the north part of the sky
travelers: people who go from one place to another
spins: turns around and around
Dipper: a group of stars shaped like a big spoon
bowl: the round, deep part of a spoon

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Star That Stays Put in the North

Square group

Throughout the night, nearly every star appears to drift slowly across the sky. One star is a remarkable exception. It is called Polaris, or the North Star, and it remains in almost exactly the same position, high above the northern horizon.

Why does it hold so still? Earth spins like a top, and the invisible line that Earth rotates around points very close to Polaris. Consequently, the star hardly moves, while all of the other stars appear to circle around it as the hours pass.

Long ago, travelers on land and at sea depended on Polaris to find north. Once they could see the star, they could work out east, west and south as well, which kept them from getting lost.

You can locate Polaris with the help of the Big Dipper. Find the two stars at the far end of the Dipper's bowl, and imagine a line passing through them. That line leads straight toward Polaris. People in the northern half of the world can see this star, but people far to the south cannot.

Questions

1. What is Polaris also called?

_____

_____

2. Why does Polaris stay in almost the same position all night?

_____

_____

3. What did travelers long ago depend on Polaris to do?

_____

_____

4. Which group of stars helps you locate Polaris?

_____

_____

5. Who is unable to see Polaris?

_____

_____

6. Why would a lost traveler at night be glad to see Polaris?

_____

_____

Words to know

Polaris: the star that stays in the north part of the sky
travelers: people who go from one place to another
spins: turns around and around
Dipper: a group of stars shaped like a big spoon
bowl: the round, deep part of a spoon

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Star That Stays Put in the North

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Star That Stays Put in the North

Easier · 131 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.2

1. The North Star.
2. The line Earth spins on points close to it.
3. To find north.
4. The Big Dipper.
5. People far to the south.
6. It shows where north is, so it helps them find their way.

Triangle: The Star That Stays Put in the North

This passage · 167 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.2

1. The North Star.
2. The line that Earth spins around points very close to it.
3. To find which way was north.
4. The Big Dipper.
5. People who live far to the south.
6. It always shows where north is, so it can help them find their way.

Square: The Star That Stays Put in the North

Harder · 176 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.3

1. The North Star.
2. The line that Earth rotates around points very close to it.
3. Find which way was north.
4. The Big Dipper.
5. People who live far to the south.
6. It always marks north, which helps the traveler find the way.