



What can you see?

Looking at constellations

time

45 minutes

learning outcomes

To:

- know that a number of constellations were given their names by the Ancient Greeks
- know the story of Queen Cassiopeia, after whom the constellation is named
- recognise two constellations (Orion and Cassiopeia)

materials needed

- photograph of the night sky in winter (Appendix)
- glue
- scissors
- colouring pencils
- paint
- paper

Preparation

For the activity **What did you see?** you will need the photograph of the sky at night in winter from the Appendix.



The stars 15 min.

Tell the children the story of Queen Cassiopeia.

Cassiopeia was the Queen of Ethiopia and married to King Cepheus. They had one daughter whose name was Andromeda. Cassiopeia was so beautiful that she boasted that she was more beautiful than the daughters of the sea god Nereus. This made the ruling god of the sea, Poseidon, so angry that he sent a monster to eat Andromeda. In order to appease the gods, King Cepheus had to tie Andromeda to a rock in the sea. In return, Nereus would make sure the country was not destroyed by a disaster or a flood. Cepheus did as he was told, but just as the hungry monster appeared on the horizon, a hero called Perseus came along and rescued Andromeda. The constellation Cassiopeia is named after the beautiful queen of the story.

Explain that the constellation Cassiopeia comprises five stars. The Ancient Greeks thought they looked like Queen Cassiopeia sitting on her throne. Show the children the drawing of Queen Cassiopeia on the discussion sheet. The children complete [Task 1](#) on the worksheet. This involves drawing lines to join up the stars in the constellation. What kind of figure can they see? Do they recognise the constellation they saw on the discussion sheet?



The children explore what they can see in the constellation Orion.



Orion 20 min.

Task 2 of the worksheet shows the stars in the constellation of Orion. Explain to them that the Ancient Greeks thought this looked like a hunter. Do they think it looks like a hunter? Encourage the children to suggest things they think it looks like. The children can colour in their version of Orion on the worksheet, or they can paint, cut and paste to create a picture of what they think it looks like.

Tip. Encourage the children to go outside and look at the night sky before they go to bed. What can they see in the stars? Can they see the constellations Cassiopeia and Orion?



What did you see? 10 min.

Sit in a circle with the children and ask them what they saw in the constellation Orion. Encourage the children to show their drawings to the rest of the class. Did everyone see the same thing? Or did they see very different things?



Ask why it is that everyone sees something different? Did anyone see a hunter? Show the children the above drawing. Also show them the picture from the Appendix of the night sky in winter. Point to the constellation of Orion.



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discussion sheet





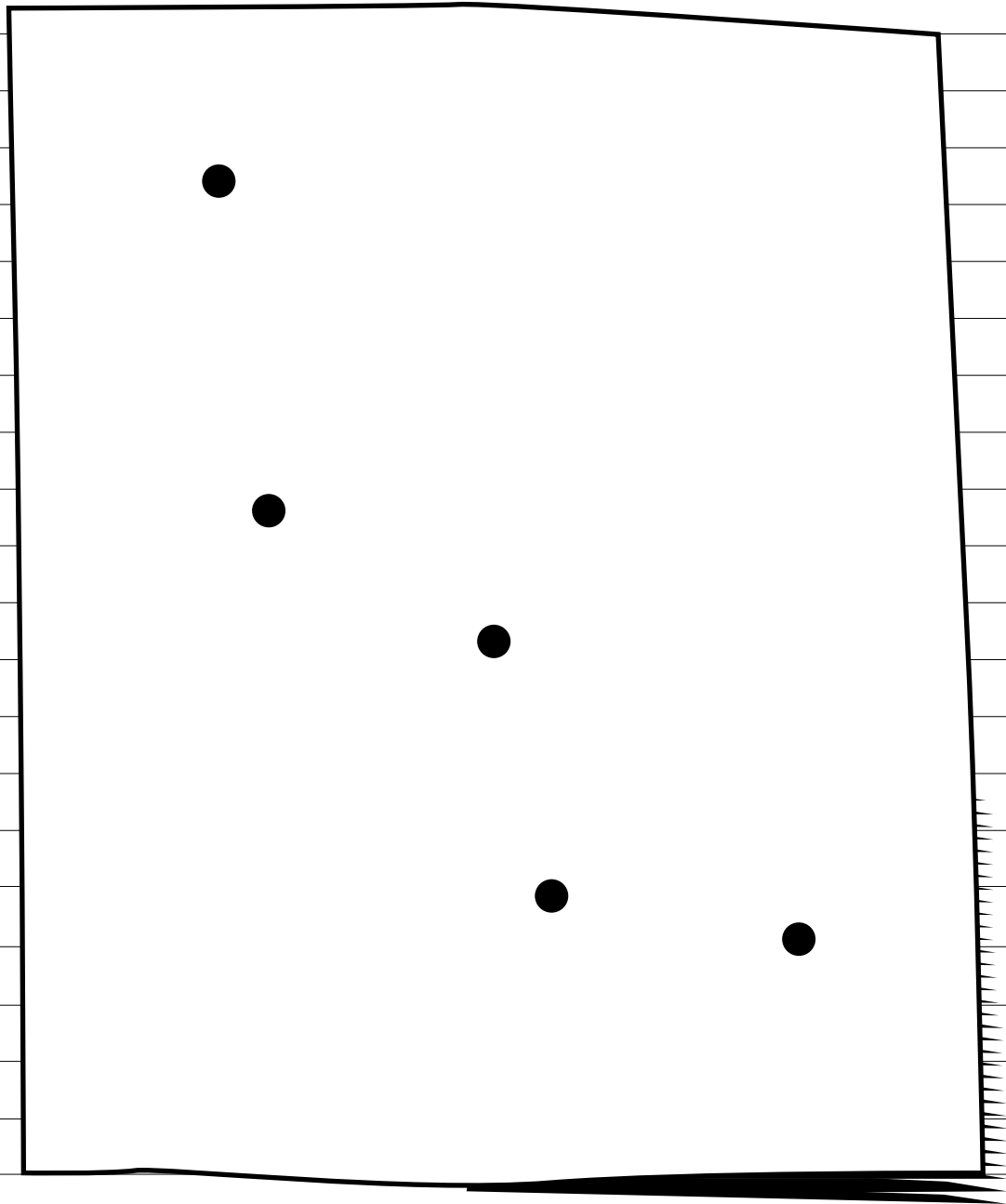
What can you see?

1 Cassiopeia

1 Look at the dots.



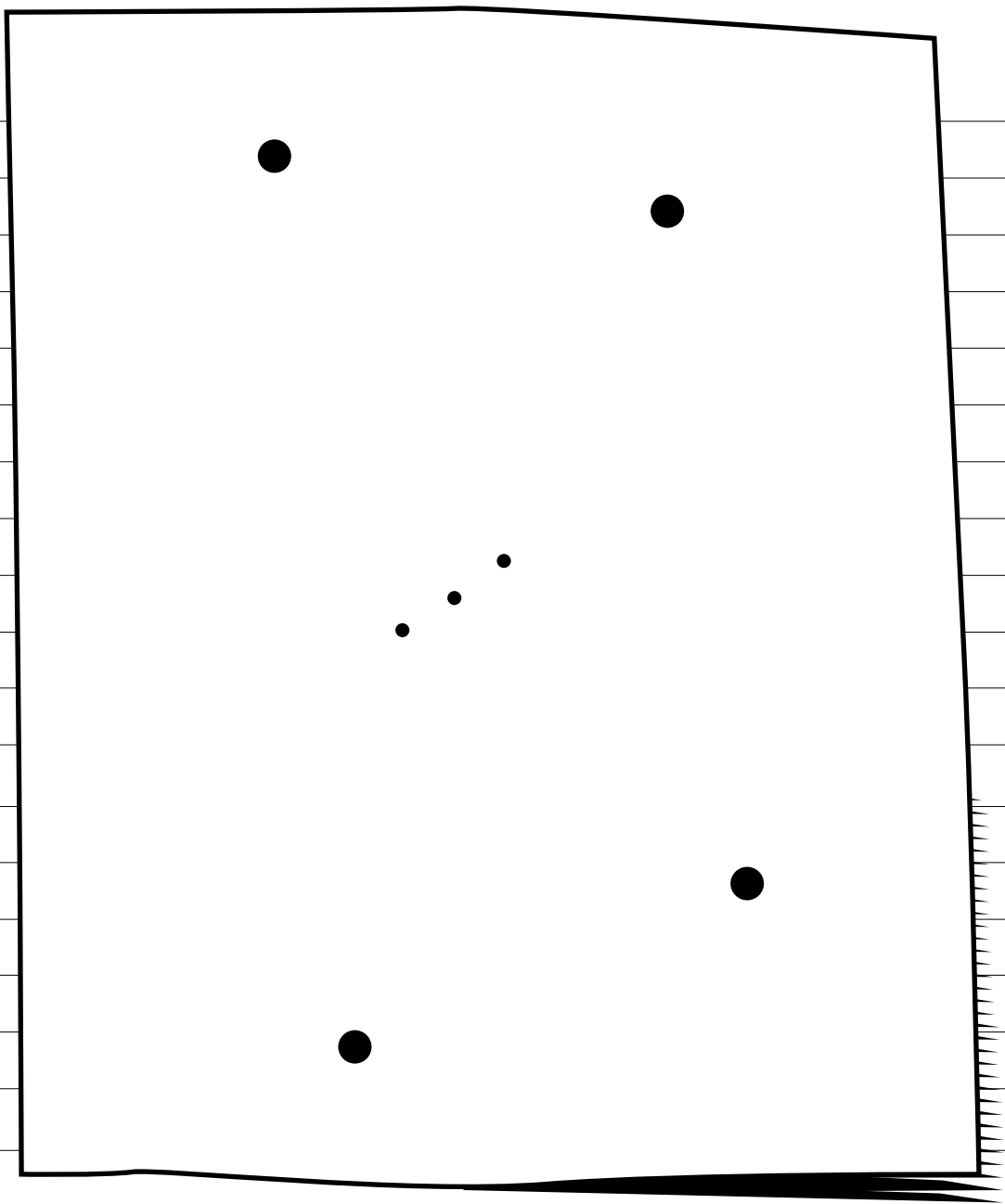
Draw lines to join the dots.

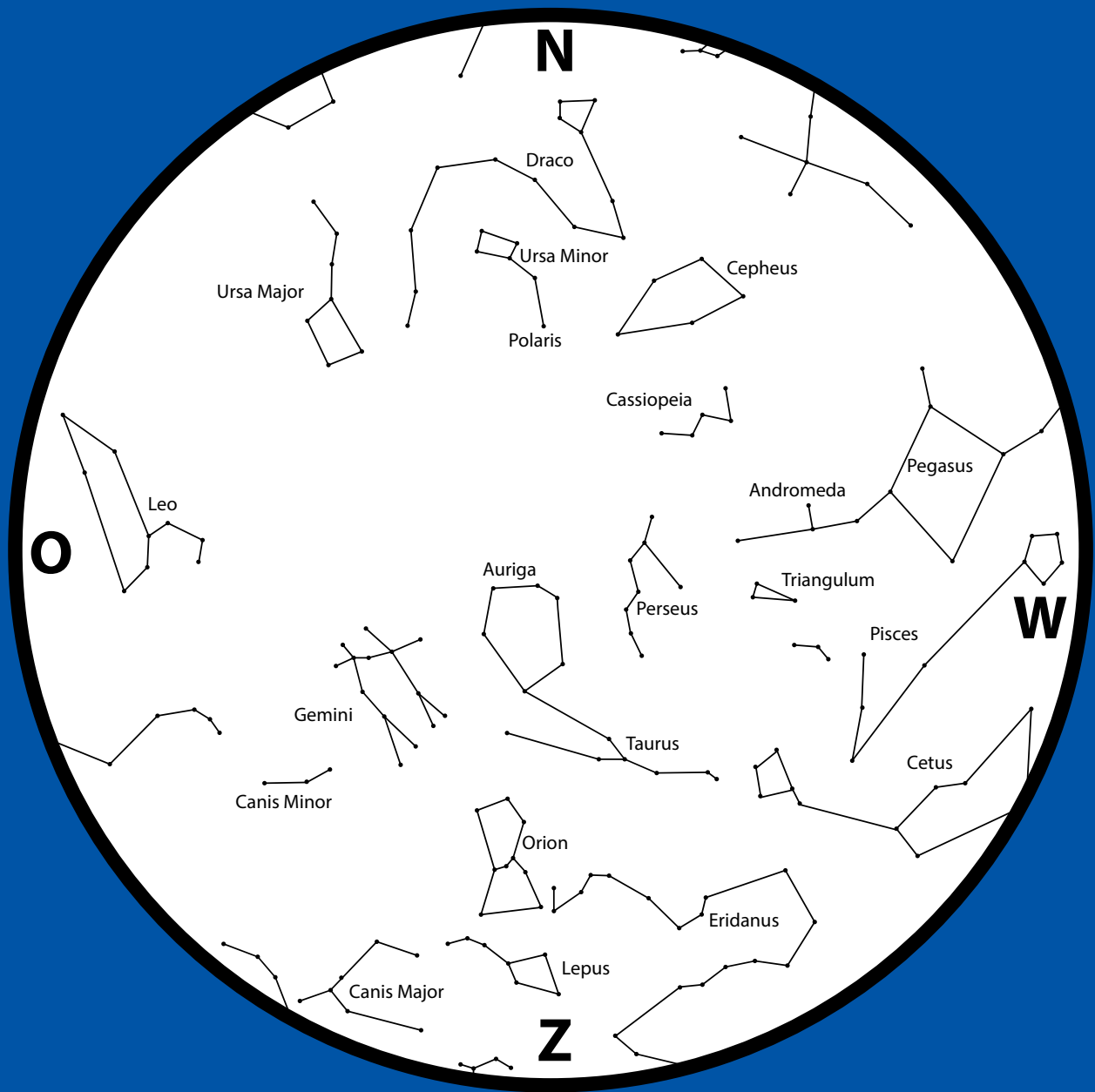


2 Orion

Here is another constellation.

What do you think it looks like?





Night sky in winter