

# Circumpolar Stars Around Polaris

The Big Dipper is an asterism that makes up part of the constellation of Ursa Major (The Big Bear). It is seen here at the lower left of the image. The Little Dipper, part of the constellation of Ursa Minor (The Little Bear), is seen at the upper right. Polaris, the North Star, is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper.

The two stars at the end of the bowl of the Big Dipper, Merak and Dubhe, are called the “Pointer Stars” because a line drawn between them points to Polaris.

The Big Dipper is a circumpolar constellation for most of the United States. This means it stays above the horizon all night long as it apparently rotates slowly counterclockwise during the night around Polaris due to the Earth’s rotation. It is also comprised of very bright stars in an easy-to-locate pattern. The Little Dipper, on the other hand, is comprised of fairly faint stars that do not really stand out, except for second-magnitude Polaris.

Directions: Copy the Big and Little Dipper patterns onto an overhead transparency. Project the pattern onto large paper and trace the stars in each constellation. Hang the poster in your room on a north-facing wall.

Source: [http://www.astropix.com/HTML/SHOW\\_DIG/038.HTM](http://www.astropix.com/HTML/SHOW_DIG/038.HTM)

