

# Vocabulary



**constellation** a group of stars that forms a pattern in the sky

Ancient stargazers named the constellations after mythical heroes, animals, or objects. Orion, for example, was named after a hunter in Greek mythology. Today, astronomers use constellations as a map to locate objects in the sky. There are 88 recognized constellations, some of which are visible only from the Southern Hemisphere.

**star** an object in space that produces its own heat and light

Stars generate their own energy by the process of nuclear fusion. Nuclear refers to the nucleus of an atom. Fusion means to combine. During nuclear fusion, the nuclei of two hydrogen atoms combine to form the nucleus of one helium atom. Fusion releases enormous amounts of energy, including the light we see from the star.