

ATLAS OF SPACE

**A journey past stars and planets
with the Little Astronauts**



Laika



**ANDRÉ KUIPERS &
GOVERT SCHILLING**

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY PACO VINK

WITTE LEEUW&

STARGAZING

The **starry sky** is beautiful beyond belief!

On a clear night, you can easily see a few thousand stars.

Though you'll probably have to find a very dark place, far from a city.

And you might want to bundle up; it can get chilly at night when you're

outdoors! Some stars appear to belong together: in groups that are called constellations. With a bit of imagination, you can see all sorts of things in these

star patterns. In the past, that's how constellations got their names. But there's

even more to see in the starry sky. The Moon, for instance. Or other bright

planets. If it's extremely dark outdoors, you can also see the Milky Way.

And sometimes a satellite is visible, or a shooting star.

Sirius is the brightest star in the sky. It gives off twenty-five times more light than our Sun. And it's actually quite close to us, which is why we can see it so clearly.

Sirius

This constellation is called **Orion**.

Long ago, people thought it looked like a hunter. The brightest stars in

the constellation are the knees, shoulders, head and belt.

Orion is easiest to spot when winter comes around.

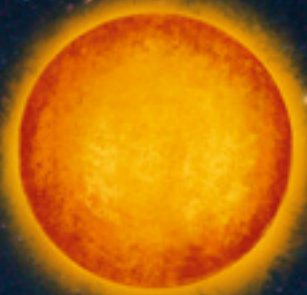
Orion Nebula

The star in Orion's right shoulder is called **Betelgeuse**. It's a supergiant star that's about 75,000 times the size of Earth. Betelgeuse is a striking orange colour.

Betelgeuse



Stars resemble tiny specks of light. But in reality, they're very big. Stars are **spheres** of glowing hot gas. Much bigger than our Earth! They only look so small because they're extremely far away: tens or hundreds of trillions of kilometres.



Here you see around seven stars gathered together. Such a group is called a **star cluster**. And this cluster is named the **Seven Sisters**.

Pole Star



Seven Sisters



Great Bear



The most famous constellation is the **Great Bear**. It looks like a large saucepan. With the help of the Great Bear, also known as the Big Dipper, you can very easily find the Pole Star. The Pole Star always indicates the direction of north.

If you're lucky, you'll catch a glimpse of a **shooting star**: a short streak of light in the night sky. It's not a real star, but a tiny space rock burning up in the Earth's atmosphere. Especially in August, lots of shooting stars are visible.



PLANET EARTH

Here's a glimpse of part of the Earth from outer space. The Earth is the planet we live on. It's a large, rotating sphere floating in the darkness of space. Earth is illuminated by the Sun. On the side where the Sun shines, it's day. On the shadow side, it's night. It takes the Earth one year to orbit the Sun. Over the course of that year, the earth is illuminated in different ways. That's how the seasons occur: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Nearly eight billion people live on Earth. And, naturally, lots of animals, trees and plants. Earth is considered a **'living' planet**. It's important that we take care of our beautiful planet to safeguard its well-being.

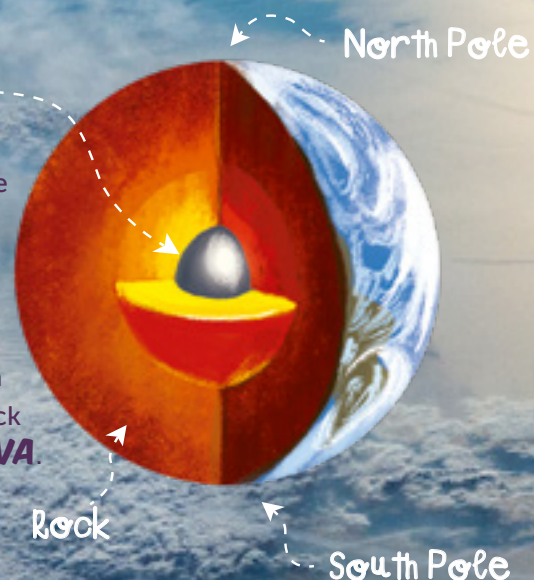


At the **North Pole** and **South Pole**, it's very cold – sometimes more than 50°C below zero. Almost all the water there is frozen solid. That's a lot of ice! These freezing cold areas are known as the Earth's polar ice caps.

Denmark

Iron Core

It's very hot deep under the ground. So extremely hot that all the rock is melted. In some places, that molten rock erupts. Such a fire-spewing mountain is called a **VOLCANO**. The molten rock is called **LAVA**.



Inside planet Earth there's a large iron core. It's a few thousand degrees Celsius there. Much of the iron is melted. The core acts like a **giant magnet**. Due to this magnetic field, a compass on Earth always points north.

At the edge of the Earth, you find the **atmosphere**. That's the thin layer of air completely surrounding our planet. Without this air, we couldn't breathe. And without the atmosphere, nothing on earth would survive.

The Earth is very big. It's 12,756 kilometres in diameter and a journey around the earth is **forty thousand kilometres!** Even travelling in a fast plane, it takes almost a day to arrive on the other side. Yet there are planets even bigger than Earth.



Wadden Sea Islands

Lake IJssel

Do you happen to recognise this spot on Earth? It's the **Netherlands**. Here you can clearly see the Dutch Wadden Sea Islands and Lake IJssel.

There are **SEVEN LANDMASSES** on Earth: Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Australia and Antarctica. Another name for a landmass is a continent. There are seas and oceans between these continents. The Earth is the only planet in the solar system with so much water. All that water is very important for sustaining life on our planet.

England