



There are 88 recognised constellations covering the whole of the night sky. Of these, 48 were named by the Ancient Greeks, many of them after objects, animals and characters from myth. Let's look at some of the incredible mythology behind the names.

Andromeda



Andromeda was the daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia. After Cassiopeia insulted Poseidon, Andromeda was sacrificed as punishment and she was left chained to a rock for the sea monster Cetus to devour her. But Andromeda was saved by the hero Perseus, who killed Cetus.

Orion (The Hunter)



Orion, son of Poseidon, was a hunter who could walk on water and was said to be the tallest and most handsome of men. He, and his famous 'Orion's Belt', make up one of the most famous constellations because they are so bright and distinctive. The name Orion means "Light of Heaven", and after being blinded by a king, there is a myth that he walked towards the sunrise and the light of the sun healed his vision.

Perseus



Perseus was the hero who rescued Andromeda from Cetus by using a diamond sword. They later married and had six children. They were both cast together into the stars and can be seen next to Andromeda's mother, Cassiopeia.

Activities:

1. Which characters behind the constellations are linked? Can you write a story linking the tales of the stars?
2. Can you see the shapes in the stars? Try drawing the character around each constellation.
3. At night, look to the sky. Can you see any of the constellations you've learned about today?
4. We haven't looked at all the constellations! Can you find out the stories behind other constellation names? What about the newer names? Do they have their own tales attached to them?