Be A Stargazer!

Look! Up in the sky! It’s a bird ... it’s a plane ...

No! It’s constellations and comets and planets and all kinds of wondrous things!

How many can YOU see in the night sky?

Teacher: Instruct students to go home and look for these objects in the night sky. When they see one, they can write their name in the spaces on the points of each star. You may want to offer a special reward to any student who sees all nine -- such as a set of the USPS Constellations stamps!
**STAR SEARCH**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**
Computers with Internet access, thick cardboard or foam board, wet or white paint and brushes, water colors, scissors, string or yarn, reference materials, Star Search handout, KWL chart, and a library of reference materials.

**SETTING THE STAGE:**
1. Discussion: Look at the poster and featured stamps. Invite students to share what they think Van Gogh wanted to communicate and why. Read their responses in the “S” (Something We Saw) column of the KWL chart. What is the name of the main star? Tell the students what it will be used to start the lesson. Name the star this week.

2. Share Expectations: The next few days we are going to search for more information about Van Gogh and other objects in the sky. By the end of this week you will be able to tell 3 facts about the night sky.

**STAR MOBILES:**
1. Students conduct research using print materials and the Internet. Use the STARtling Facts outline master to facilitate their efforts. Whenever students find a fact, they should shut the book or look away from the computer before stating the fact to the class. The research should be English and report in a complete sentence on a separate star. You should find 5 STARtling facts in all. Your research stars will become part of your star mobile.

2. In honor of National Stamp Collecting Month, the US Postal Service has sent us this beautiful poster about the night sky. The special stamps featured in the stars were created by McRay Magleby, an artist and educator. Do you recognize any of these constellations? One of them was created by McRay Magleby. What could you see in the sky if you were a star?

3. Record students’ responses on large notebook paper. Tell the list in the bulletin board.

4. To better understand and appreciate these stories, you might want to learn more about the artist, Vincent Van Gogh. Starry, Starry Night, about Van Gogh’s life. Access the link by clicking on the appropriate button on the above site. Additional background information about Van Gogh is available from the Van Gogh Museum and Van Gogh Foundation. Search http://www.vangogh.nl/ and http://www.vangogh.org/. Send in all the previously listed facts.

5. Conduct a general conversation about the paintings. How do the stories link the attention to the night sky? What different objects appear in the paintings? Why do the whole scene move around in the night sky? Because of Van Gogh’s Starry Night, compare and contrast the two paintings.

6. To better understand and appreciate these stories, you might want to learn more about the artist, Vincent Van Gogh. Starry, Starry Night, about Van Gogh’s life. Access the link by clicking on the appropriate button on the above site. Additional background information about Van Gogh is available from the Van Gogh Museum and Van Gogh Foundation. Search http://www.vangogh.nl/ and http://www.vangogh.org/.

7. Share Expectations: The next few days we are going to search for more information about Van Gogh and other objects in the sky. By the end of this week you will be able to tell 3 facts about the night sky.

**STAR SEARCH**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**
Create a Constellations bulletin board with midnight blue background paper, the USFS poster, and Greek myths and monsters. Hang a large painting of a starry sky in the cafeteria or art room. Cover students’ work areas with newspaper. Sketch paper will be used for hats and other decorations.

**SETTING THE STAGE:**
1. Today we’re going to begin a unit about the night sky. I want you shut your eyes and pretend you live in the 1700s. What would you like to do? Do you want to learn more about the stars? Do you want to learn more about the Sun and the Moon? Do you want to learn more about the planets?

2. One of the most ancient examples of stargazing is Stone Henge. Share this site: http://www.solar-center.stanford.edu/stars/index.html. The next few days we’re going to learn about stargazing throughout history. By the end of these lessons you will be able to construct a timeline about astronomy and read a star chart.

3. The Greeks created myths, or star stories, to explain the four constellations featured on the stamps. What does Leo mean? That’s right, it’s Latin for lion because the Greeks thought it looked like the lion star. If you learn about Perseus, Andromeda, and the Sun and the Moon, you’ll learn about another constellations.

4. The International Astronomical Union has identified 88 constellations

5. Students create timelines about important moments in astronomy. Use paper or Timeliner, students create timelines depicting these important moments in astronomy. Share your timelines on the bulletin board.

6. Super Stargazers: Each pair of students produces a constellation using colored paper, markers, and poster board. Each pair makes a hat with the constellation name. They then stand in front of the class and read their mini-story about the constellation. The first team to correctly name all the stars in the constellation wins the game.