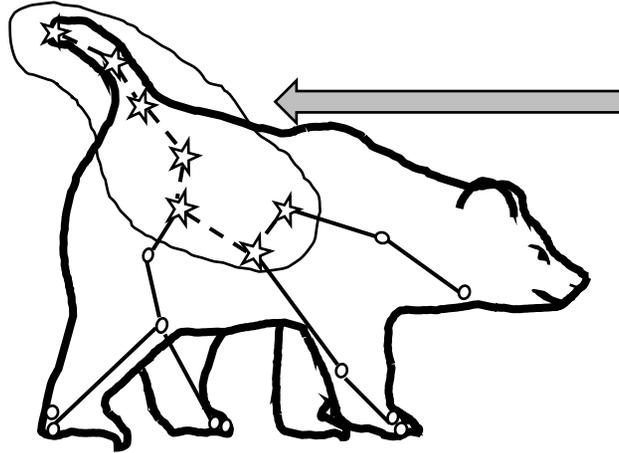


In the Stars

The constellations have been the sources of legends for thousands of years. Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, the Latin names for “Great Bear” and “Lesser Bear,” are well-known constellations. These constellations are home to the groups of stars known as the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper.



The Big Dipper is an **asterism** in the constellation **Ursa Major** (the Great Bear). It is a familiar **star** shape in the northern sky. **Asterisms** are prominent groups of **stars** that form patterns but are smaller than, or part of, a constellation.

Legend of the Big Dipper and the Oceti Sakowin (o-chet-e shak-o-ween)

While hunting, a leader suddenly fell and died. Seven followers (representing the seven stars) took the body home. During the burial, the widow, with her two children behind her, followed four people holding the stretcher. These seven became the forerunners of the Oceti Sakowin. <https://rosebudfund.org/about-the-lakota>

Dakota and Lakota have several meanings for the Big Dipper:

To Win/Tuŋ Wiŋ – Blue Woman/Birth Woman: Midwives and others pray to the Blue/Birth Woman Spirit so newborn babies will enter this world safely. She is a doorkeeper between worlds.

Wiçakiyuhapi – Stretcher: The Stretcher carries a person that has passed away into the spirit world. These are the four stars on the bowl of the Big Dipper. The Mourners are the three handle stars that are carrying the deceased.

Oceti Sakowin – Seven sacred rites/council fires: The Big Dipper also represents the Oceti Sakowin, the Seven Council Fires of the Dakota, Lakota and Nakota nations.

<https://web.stcloudstate.edu/aslee/DAKOTAMAP/DakotaConstellationGuide.pdf>

After coloring the Ursa Major coloring sheet (other side) add the star stickers to the Big Dipper

The Big Dipper

Ursa Major

(Great Bear)

