

## Matariki

In England we celebrate New Year's Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January every year. Māori people call their New Year celebration Matariki. Matariki is a word that can be translated as tiny eyes, or eyes of God. It is also the name for a small group of stars that drop below the horizon in April and reappear in June. When this happens, it is the signal for the Māori New Year to start. Early Māori sailors used these stars to help them find their way. In 2020, Matariki will be celebrated on the 13<sup>th</sup> July.

Different tribes celebrate Matariki in different ways.

In the past, it was a time to:	Some things we might do now at Matariki include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finish storing up food for the winter.</li><li>• Create new woven clothes and baskets.</li><li>• Remember ancestors and listen to old tribal stories.</li><li>• Learn about the natural world.</li><li>• Learn to play string games.</li><li>• Celebrate the coming year.</li><li>• Make, decorate and fly kites.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have a celebration with friends and whānau (family).</li><li>• Learn or do some weaving.</li><li>• Learn about stars and see Matariki through a telescope.</li><li>• Talk to people in our family about our family history and stories.</li><li>• Fly kites.</li><li>• Learn about Māori myths and culture.</li><li>• Give respect to the whenua (land) on which we live.</li><li>• Learn more about how we can care for our Mother Earth.</li></ul>

### Question time

1. What does the word Matariki mean?
2. Explain why Maori people celebrate Matariki on a different day each year.
3. Tell me one similarity between how people celebrated Matariki in the past compared to the present.
4. In the past people would finish storing food up for the winter. Why do you think that they no longer do this?

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## Constellations



Matariki is the name given to a certain group of stars in the sky. Groups of stars are commonly known as constellations. A constellation is a group of visible stars which form a pattern when viewed from Earth. For thousands of years different cultures have created myths about the constellations. Myths are traditional stories which include gods and heroes who have the power to make extraordinary things happen.

There are many different myths about Matariki. One is that Matariki is a mother with her six daughters around her. Another is that the god Tāwhirimātea was angry that the Sky (Ranginui) and the Earth (Papatūānuku) were separated and tore out his eyes and threw them into the sky to comfort Ranginui.

On the next page you will be creating your own constellation and myth. I want you to draw the constellation first.

Whilst writing your myth I want you to answer the following questions.

- Who are the characters? Are they Gods, animals or ordinary people?
- Where is the myth set?
- What happens to the characters?
- Is there a moral/lesson to be learned from the myth?
- How does your myth end? Remember the character must end up in the sky to become a constellation.

You can use the space below for planning before you start your final piece on the next page.

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