



NATIONAL ASTRONOMY WEEK

Chasing the Moon – print out sheet

What's happening in the sky?

During National Astronomy Week (1–9 February 2025), the Moon will move so that we see it in different places against the background of stars. It will also change its appearance as different parts of it are lit by the Sun.

You may also notice that our whole view of space – including the stars – changes through the night. Our star map is set for about 6.30pm. If you go out later, the view will have rotated. And if you go out too much later, the Moon may have set below the horizon – so try to get out early especially at the beginning of the week.

How to use the sheet

Every evening, pop outside and have a look for the Moon. It's best if you can do this at about the same time each day but it's ok if this isn't possible.

Have a look at the nearby stars and planets and observe the Moon's position compared to these. This will help you mark its position on the star map. You can do this however you like (e.g. draw an X). And maybe write the date next to it?

Now have a good look at the Moon itself. Notice which parts are dark, and which parts are lit. Can you spot any big features, like craters or dark splotches? (The dark bits are where lakes of lava cooled down into flat plains.)

At the bottom of the sheet, there is a Moon for each date from 1–9 February. Colour in the Moon for each day, shading in the dark part and drawing in any features you can notice. It's up to you how much detail to include.

Things to think about

Why does the Moon change its position and appearance like this?

From your observations, could you predict where the Moon will be on 10 February, and how it will appear on that date?

Interesting Moon / Phase facts

- The length of a month was originally based on the time it took the Moon to go through all its phases. The Moon acted as a natural calendar.
- We only ever see one side of the Moon. The other side looks quite different, without so many big dark splotches.
- The Moon isn't the only object in our sky that shows phases. If you are able to try some binoculars or a telescope, look at Venus and you will see it has phases too. Just be very careful to wait until the Sun is below the horizon and the sky is dark before trying this else you could hurt your eyes.

National Astronomy Week – find out more

Go to the website at astronomyweek.org.uk for stargazing guides, information, and to find stargazing and astronomy events happening near you.

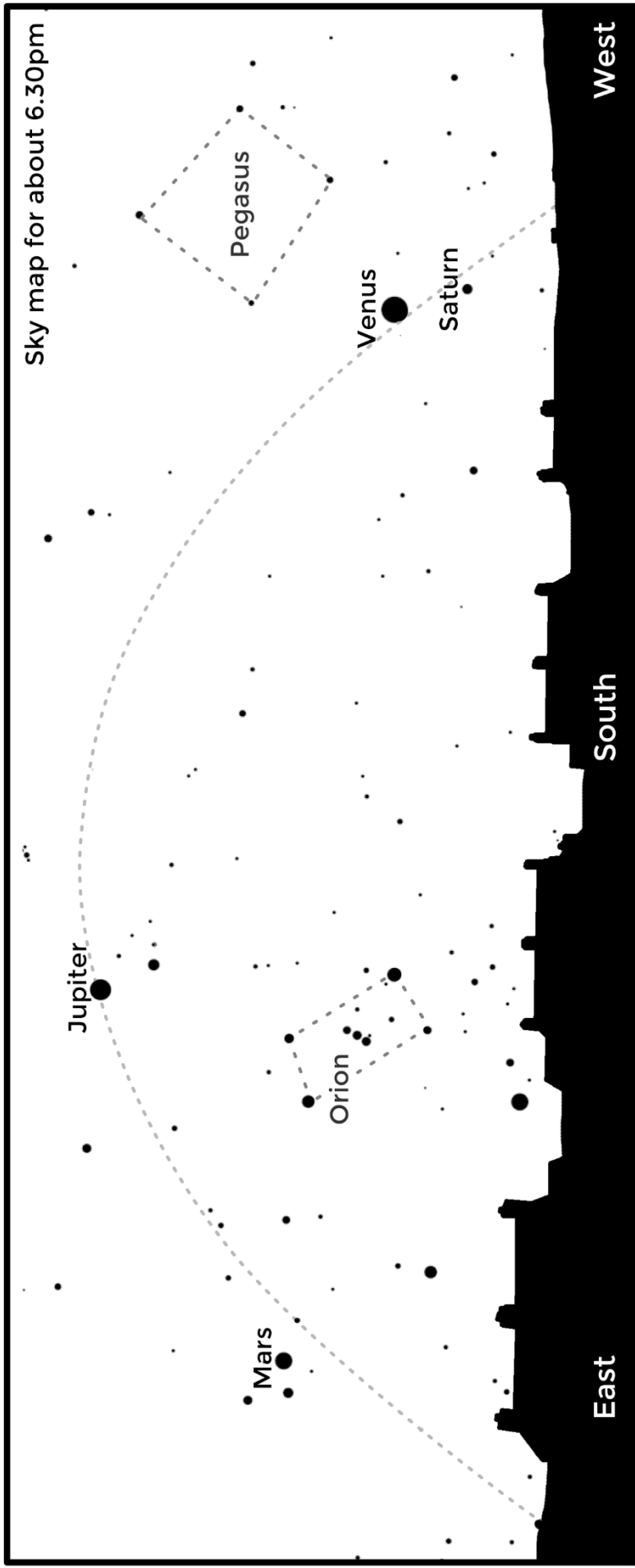
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Mark the Moon's position on the star map each evening. Colour in each Moon below to track its changing appearance.



1 Feb	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9