



When the sun goes down, the night reveals a world full of lights. The sky is a fascinating world, where you can see dozens of constellations right above you. But did you know you can navigate by looking at the stars? Before the invention of GPS and even the compass, ancient Polynesians did just that: They navigated the open ocean without any instruments by following the stars. They were the first people to use the North Star to orient themselves. The North Star, or Polaris, gets its name because it is positioned almost exactly above the North Pole, in line with the Earth's rotational axis. You want to go north? **Follow the steps below:**

# Navigate by the stars

- 1** Choose a **starry night** and find a spot without streetlights or neon signs. Bring a flashlight to help you find your way.
- 2** **Stay safe!** Go with your **parent** or a **friend** (with your parent's permission).
- 3** Give your **eyes** some time to **adjust to the darkness**.
- 4** Now, look up at the night sky. Do you see the "**Pointer Stars**"? These are the two outer stars of the Big Dipper.
- 5** **Imagine a line** through the two stars of the Dipper's "**scoop**" that points to the North Star.
- 6** If you did it correctly, you will see that the North Star is the **tip of the Little Dipper's handle**.
- 7** **Well done!** You have found the **North Star**, which means that you can identify which way is North – and from there, determine the **three other cardinal directions**. Now you can navigate from wherever you are just by looking up at the stars!

