

# What do you see in the sky?

This Maya constellation from the Guatemalan highlands is the *Seven Macaw* (*Big Dipper in Greek Mythology.*)

7 bright stars make up the body and tail of Seven Macaw, a bird who is arrogant and brags about his dazzling light.

In the Guatemalan highlands, the constellation disappears below the horizon for part of each night due to the tilt of Earth's axis.

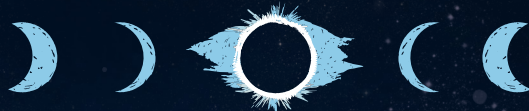
According to Popol Wuj, the Maya origin story, the disappearance of the constellation each night symbolizes how the hero twins JunAjpu' and Xb'alamke (*the Sun and the Moon*) punish Seven Macaw for his arrogance by taking away his bright light.



**Seven Macaw**

# Pinhole Projector

Maya civilizations kept detailed records of their observations of the sky for thousands of years and were able to accurately predict solar eclipses.



You can use this card as a pinhole projector during a solar eclipse! **DO NOT use this card to look directly at the Sun.**

1. Use a star-shaped hole puncher to cut out the constellation's stars.
2. With your back to the Sun, hold the card close to the sidewalk so that sunlight passes through the constellation holes. First you will see star shapes of light on the ground.
3. Next, slowly move the card farther away from the sidewalk. Notice when the star shapes turn round. These are inverted images of the round Sun!

## Sources

*Tepeu Poz Salanic (K'iche' Maya) 2021 Res. Notes AAS 5 94*  
*STARLAB teacher's curriculum – Maya Skies. University of New Mexico.*  
*Seven Macaw illustration inspired by Drawing of Izapa Stela 25*