

Star charts

The star charts show the stars visible on a clear night without a telescope, as well as some other objects such as galaxies visible only with binoculars or, in some cases, a small telescope. The different sizes of dot refer to stars of different magnitude. In addition special symbols are used for variable stars and double stars, while open clusters and globular clusters have their own symbols, as do planetary nebulae, diffuse nebulae, and galaxies. The boundaries of the Milky Way are shown by dotted lines, each dotted line being an isophote, i.e. showing those parts which are equally bright. The galactic equator (the central line of the Milky Way) is indicated by a line of dots and dashes, the numbers along it giving galactic longitude.

The ecliptic (a line of dashes) indicates the Sun's apparent path in the sky, and it is within the Zodiac - a band some 7° wide centred on the ecliptic - that the Moon and planets appear to move.

The Sun

The Sun moves through all the constellations of the Zodiac in the course of a year, and its approximate positions are as follows:

January	Sagittarius
February	Capricornus
March	Aquarius
April	Pisces
May	Aries
June	Taurus
July	Gemini
August	Cancer
September	Leo
October	Virgo
November	Libra
December	Scorpius

These positions are not exact, since towards the close of a month the Sun may be approaching or entering the next zodiacal sign or constellation. Moreover they do not coincide with the positions used by astrologers for the simple reason that precession has caused the

