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CHAPTER

## 15 Cultural Astronomy for Linguists

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### Abstract

Humans have a long history of watching the sky and incorporating the sky into their culture in the form of art and stories. This article tries to explore the importance of cultural astronomy for linguists. They developed uses for the sky such as for timekeeping and night navigation. As with other parts of their natural environment, humans continued to watch and learn about the sky to better their lives throughout their history, resulting in an aspect of environmental adaptation that is often overlooked by scholars today. This article begins with definitions presented as a first step towards thinking about the many ways that people relate to the sky. This crash course in cultural astronomy should enable the reader to collect relevant information with some rigor and confidence. The interdisciplinary field of cultural astronomy is currently dominated by astronomers, and the goal here is to increase linguists' awareness of astronomy as a topic in field research, leading to them attending cultural astronomy meetings and publishing in cultural astronomy journals. Cultural astronomy is broadly defined as the study of the relationship between humans and the sky. There are a couple of working definitions that provide details of this relationship such as that of Campion 'the use of astronomical knowledge, beliefs or theories to inspire, inform or influence social forms and ideologies, or any aspect of human behaviour'.

**Keywords:** [cultural astronomy](#), [linguistic awareness of astronomy](#), [sky](#), [timekeeping](#), [night navigation](#)

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