

NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



Grade Level

PK-2

Subject

**Astronomy
Art**

Lesson Title

**The Long Night Moon:
Learning about Moon Phases**

Activity Description: In this activity, students will read *The Long Night Moon*, a story that was inspired by the Native American custom of naming full moons. Students will then have the opportunity to learn about the different phases of the moon, and why they exist that way. Students will then be able to identify and/or name each moon phase and use this activity to name each moon phase when they look out at the moon each night.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- WiFi access (recommended)
- ["The Long Night Moon" Cynthia Rylant and Mark Seigel](#) (read-aloud via YouTube)
- [Moon Phases Diagram](#) (printable)
- Optional YouTube Video to explain the 8 moon phases: ["The Moon for Kids"](#)
- 8 Oreo cookies (or some sort of sandwich cookie variety)
- Paper Plate

STEPS

This activity is for children to do with a person from the family or community.

1. Listen to the read aloud of ["The Long Night Moon"](#) by Cynthia Rylant and Mark Seigel with your child.

Creating the Moon Phases

1. Watch the optional YouTube video ["The Moon for Kids"](#) with your child to explain the 8 different ways the moon changes in 1 month.
2. Take out the ["Moon Phases Diagram"](#), and place it next to your child, so that they can see the moon phases as they create their cookie moon phases.
3. Take your 8 cookies and arrange them in a circle around the paper plate.
4. Keep one in its original state. Share with your child that this your new moon.
5. Take another cookie on the opposite side of the plate, and take the top off, leaving the cream intact. This is your full moon.
6. Ask your child to nibble the top pieces of the other six cookies to create the phases of the moon they see in the diagram.
7. When it gets dark, ask your child to point out which cookie looks like the moon. Consider doing this over multiple nights, so your child can see the moon grow and then shrink.
 - a. Share with your child the name of each moon phase, and why it is called that.

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HELPFUL TIPS

Parents and caregivers: This is an opportunity for your child to better understand how and why the moon changes like it does.

Questions about the Story

- As you listen to the story with your child, consider some of the following prompting questions:
 - What were the unique names given to each full moon by Native Americans as they watched the full moon throughout the year?
 - What did each full moon look like?
 - What was each full moon is being compared to depending on the time of year and the changing seasons?
 - What animals were present under each full moon or what animals did the author talk about?
 - Why do you think those animals were there?

Why the Moon Changes (consider watching the optional YouTube video "[The Moon for Kids](#)", that explains this in further detail)

- Ask your child if they have ever looked at the moon at night, and noticed that it always looks different. Sometimes it is dark, but other times it can be bright and full.
- Share with your child that the full moon is only one way the moon changes, and that just like the Native Americans gave names to each full moon, there are different names for the different ways the moon changes. These are called phases.
- Share with your child that the moon changes because the earth is moving, and so is the moon, so sometimes we can only see part of the moon as everything moves.

Creating the Moon Phases Cookie Activity

- As your child is creating each moon phase point to the [Moon Phases Diagram](#), and call out the picture and name of each moon phase.
 - For example, "waxing" means the moon is "growing", and "waning" means the moon is "shrinking".

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Families and Educators: This activity may open up other talking points about Astronomy, including the moon, the stars, constellations, and even other planets.

- Check out these fun outdoor [Astronomy Activities](#) to help kids of all ages learn about the stars and planets.
- Want to learn more about How Constellations Got Their Names? Check out our "[Native Night Skies](#)" Activity.

Activity Resource Links:

- Adapted from: "The Long Night Moon" Cynthia Rylant and Mark Seigel (read-aloud via YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAOVkORKkmQ> and Moon Activities for Preschoolers: <https://team-cartwright.com/moon-activities-for-preschoolers/>
- Moon Phases Diagram (printable): <https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/pictures/space/moonphases.html>
- Optional YouTube Video to explain the 8 moon phases: "The Moon for Kids": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYGvCuiRijI>
- Outdoor Astronomy Activities: <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/astronomy/astronomy-activities>
- Native Night Skies: How the Constellations Got Their Names: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c9fbf319973d7000185377f/t/5ec697c456b1945a89fac04e/1590073284630/NIEA-Illuminative_Native+Night+Skies+-+How+Constellations+Got+Their+Names.pdf