



2010 is now drawing to a close and you are likely already considering when your school will cover the 'Beyond' section of the Earth & Beyond topic in 2011. If you are, you may want to consider covering it when there are real life events that your students can go outside and look at in the real sky. There is nothing like seeing the real thing in the night sky to increase the impact of what you teach them in the classroom.

Predictable astronomical events which are visible to the unaided eye which you may want to plan your teaching around include the following:

* The 2011 oppositions of Saturn and Jupiter. These occur on 4 April 2011 and on 29 October 2011 respectively. The few months after a planet reaches opposition are the ideal times to look at these planets as they are at their brightest.

* There are a number of planetary close encounters which will be visible to the unaided eye. The most notable close encounter will occur in the morning predawn May sky when the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars and Jupiter will be in close proximity above the Eastern horizon. It will look spectacular. Then during the evening twilight of November 2011, Mercury and Venus will be in close proximity in the evening twilight above the Western horizon.

* Finally, there is a Total Lunar Eclipse which occurs in the late evening of 10 December 2011.

Regards,
Paul Floyd.

Best nights for a star party in Term 4 2010

Amateur astronomical societies are generally happy to assist schools by running a star party. This means that they will bring telescopes and volunteers to your school so that your students can look through them at the night sky. Book ahead and avoid the time between First Quarter Moon and two nights after Full Moon. This avoids the light of the Moon washing out other sky objects. Using this criteria, the best nights therefore are:

- * Monday 11 October to Thursday 14 October
- * Thursday 11 November to Saturday 13 November

A list of astronomical societies in the A.C.T. and South East Queensland can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://tinyurl.com/7k7fb4>

Planets visible to the eye

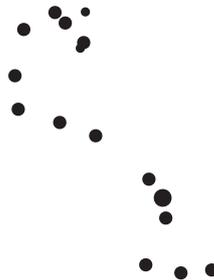
October: At the start of the month, Venus and Mars are visible low above the Western horizon during evening twilight. Jupiter is easily visible to the unaided eye as a very bright star above the Eastern horizon.

November: Mercury and Mars are visible during evening twilight low above the Western horizon all month. Look high above the North Eastern horizon to locate the planet Jupiter.

December: Jupiter is visible high above the North Western horizon.

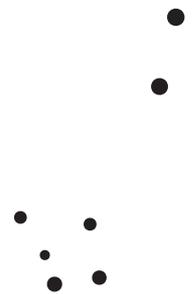
Easy Constellations

Scorpius 'The Scorpion'



Look above the Western horizon at 7.30 pm in mid October.

Crux 'The Southern Cross' and 'The Pointers'



Look above the South Western horizon at the end of evening twilight.

2010 Moon Phases



New

First Quarter

Full Moon

Last Quarter

	New	First Quarter	Full Moon	Last Quarter
October	8	15	23	1 / 30
November	6	14	22	29
December	6	13	21	28

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