

# Earth's Place in Space

Have you ever wondered about Earth's place in space? This is a question that space scientists research every day. They also investigate other objects in space, such as other planets, stars and **comets**.

Space science, or **astronomy**, is the area of science that studies objects in space. A scientist who studies astronomy or space is known as an **astronomer**.

There are many types of space science. One way to categorise space science is

by the various objects or behaviour that astronomers and scientists are interested in.

Astronomers who investigate stars work in the field of stellar astronomy. A scientist who specialises in planets works in the field of planetary science. Astronomers who study our own **galaxy**, the Milky Way Galaxy, work in the field of galactic astronomy. Scientists who are interested in other galaxies work in the field of extragalactic astronomy.

Sample pages

Anybody who is interested in studying space is called an astronomer.

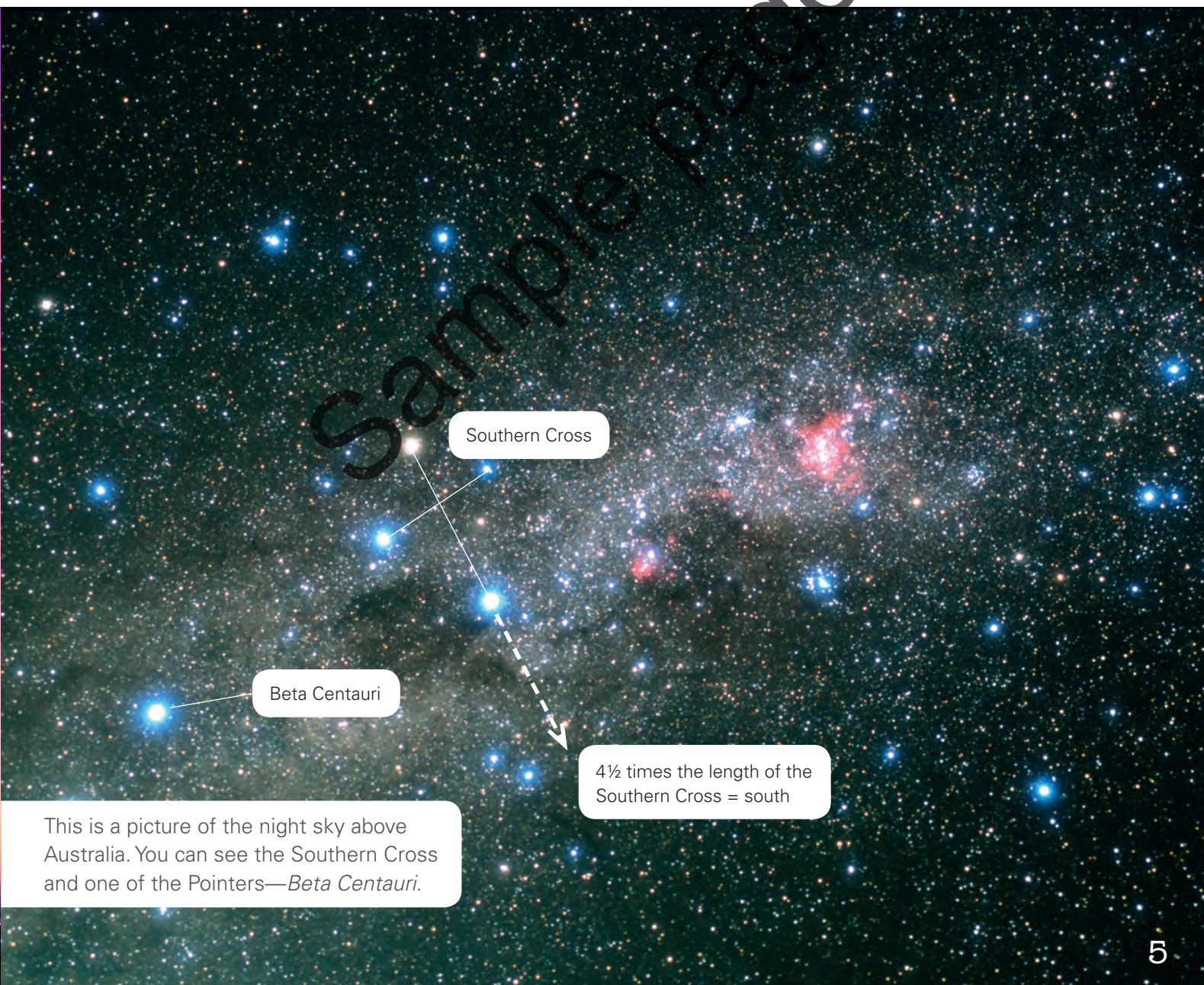


## Our Solar System

Earth is part of a system of **planets** that **orbit** the Sun. Everything that orbits the Sun is part of our **solar system**. This includes the eight planets that orbit the Sun, as well as their moons. Other objects that orbit the Sun and are part of our solar system are **dwarf planets**, **asteroids** and comets.

In this book, you will learn about some of the objects in our solar system. This book also outlines some of the interesting tools scientists use to explore the solar system.

The Southern Cross (or Crux) is a group of five stars that can be seen in the night sky in the Southern Hemisphere. You can use the Southern Cross to find south by extending the long arm of the cross by 4.5 times in the direction of its brightest star.



Southern Cross

Beta Centauri

4½ times the length of the Southern Cross = south

This is a picture of the night sky above Australia. You can see the Southern Cross and one of the Pointers—*Beta Centauri*.