

13 Deneb in the constellation Cygnus

Distance

1,550 light years

Luminosity

196,000 times that of the sun

Colour

White

Surface temperature

8,700 K

Diameter

200 times the diameter of the sun

(To Planet Trail scale: 280 m)

Mass

23 solar masses

Evening visibility

June to November

Deneb is the brightest star in the constellation Cygnus and the fourteenth brightest fixed star we can see in the sky.

Deneb is so far away from us that the distance can only be measured with a significant margin of error. As a result, data on luminosity, diameter and mass is also relatively imprecise. Deneb falls into the blue giant category of stars. The star emits more energy in one minute than our sun does in a month. To the best of our knowledge, it is the most luminous star in our Milky Way. If it replaced our sun in our solar system, it would reach as far as the Earth's orbit because of its enormous size.

It is thought that Deneb is orbited by a companion star, which means it is a binary star system.

Deneb forms the Summer Triangle together with Altair in Cygnus and Vega in Lyra.

Because of their relative brightness these three fixed stars are the first to become visible at dusk in the summer months.

Other bright stars in the constellation Cygnus:

Schedir Distance: 1,800 light years

Gienah Distance: 57 light years

Fawaris Distance: 165 light years

Albireo Distance: 330 light years

13 Constellation Cygnus

Cygnus is an impressive constellation in the summer and autumn sky. If you mentally connect the bright stars with each other, the two rows form a large cross (this is known as the Northern Cross). With a little imagination, you can picture a flying swan, with Deneb, its brightest star, acting as its tail feathers. The bright band of our Milky Way runs through the constellation. It looks as if the swan is flying along this road. A number of other fixed stars and nebulous objects can be seen in the constellation with the help of binoculars. You can also recognise dark nebulae and several bright star clusters. The constellation is depicted as a flying swan with an elongated neck and outstretched wings.

There are several myths about the constellation Cygnus. Here is the probably best-known version:

Zeus transformed himself into a swan to seduce the Spartan queen Leda. He seduced her on her wedding night. Leda became pregnant by him and her husband at the same time and gave birth to two eggs on the same day. Zeus' immortal twins (Helena and Polydeuces) hatched from one egg and her husband's two mortal twins (Castor and Clytemnestra) from the other. Like the swan, the second set of twins were placed in the sky as Castor and Pollux in the constellation Gemini.