

## 1 Pollux in the constellation Gemini

Distance

34 light years

Luminosity

32 times that of the sun

Colour

Bright orange

Surface temperature

4,500 K

Diameter

9.1 times the diameter of the sun

(To Planet Trail scale: 13 m)

Mass

1.9 solar masses

Evening visibility

December to May

Pollux is the brightest star in the constellation Gemini and the twelfth brightest star we can see in the sky. Pollux falls into the red giant phase of the star life cycle. Spectroscopic observations have shown that a planet three times the mass of Jupiter orbits Pollux every 590 days. The constellation Gemini gives its name to the corresponding sign of the zodiac. This means that, seen from Earth, our sun passes by the constellation over several weeks in the daytime sky.

Pollux forms the Winter Hexagon together with the stars Procyon in Canis Minor, Sirius in Canis Major, Rigel in Orion, Aldebaran in Taurus and Capella in Auriga.

Castor is the second brightest star in the constellation Gemini. It is almost as bright as Pollux, but appears white. Castor is actually a multiple system of six stars. Through a small telescope, the star can already be seen as two to three individual stars.

### Other bright stars in the constellation Gemini

Castor            Distance: 52 light years

Alhena           Distance: 105 light years

Tejat Posterior Distance: 205 light years

Mebstuta        Distance: 900 light years

## **1 Constellation Gemini**

The constellation Gemini resembles an elongated rectangle with two bright stars (Castor and Pollux) as its vertices. The prominent neighbouring constellations Auriga and Orion help to locate it in the sky. The Milky Way runs through part of the constellation. Several open star clusters can be found in this region. The constellation is positioned along the ecliptic. This means that, seen from Earth, the sun, moon and planets pass by the constellation. The sun spends time in this constellation from late June to late July. The two almost equally bright stars led to the constellation being imagined as Gemini, the twins. The constellation is depicted by a pair of male figures.

In Greek mythology, Castor and Polydeuces (Latin: Castor and Pollux) were an inseparable pair of twins. Leda was their mother. The mortal of the two, Castor, had Tyndareus as his father, while Zeus was the father of the immortal Polydeuces. It is said that they never argued and had plenty of adventures together. When the mortal Castor was fatally wounded in battle, Polydeuces asked his father Zeus to allow him to die too. Zeus then placed them both in the sky. They now spend half their time together in the underworld (Hades) and the other half in the sky (Olympus).