

## General Instructions - Messier

There are three ways to observe Messier Objects for a certificate. Each one has its own certificate.

- Binoculars
- Manual Telescope
- Guided Telescope

Each of the three ways to observe is broken down into three different patterns. Choose one that suites you.

- Classic
  - Using the Classic Star Map(s) start at the right (West) and go to the Left (East) (typical star chart orientation facing South)
  - Start at dusk and finish at dawn
  - Approximately 12 hours of observing
  - [Complete Map](#), Sectional Maps – [Evening](#), [Midnight](#) and [Morning](#)
- Modified Classic
  - Using the Classic Star Map(s) start in the right (West) and go to the Left (East) (typical star chart orientation facing South)
  - Start 3a.m. – observe until dawn
  - Go to bed
  - Get up and start observing at dusk
  - Finish at 3a.m.
  - Done in approximately 24 hours
- Seasonal
  - Pick a [Seasonal List](#) of Messier Objects and observe when conditions are good
  - Done in a year

Feel intimidated? Don't think you can reach high counts? DON'T WORRY!  
ENJOY!

- Set your own goals and don't bother with those high counts.
- The marathon is for having fun!
- Set your goals so that you do have fun!

The guidelines are pretty simple, please read them over if you plan on participating.

- It's an honor system.
- No one is going to be looking over your shoulder to verify your observations.
- Get an [Observing List](#) to keep track of observations.
- Fill out the heading.
- Find an object.
- Observe/image it with your eye through the main eyepiece of your telescope.
- Mark off the entry.
- Go to the next object.

Start observing/imaging when you are ready, presumably some time after sun set. It is up to you to decide when you are finished observing. Some conditions could be when you have reached a set goal or sometime after morning twilight.

Here are some additional guidelines you should be aware of. These cover situations and conditions that have occurred in the past, but in no way do they cover the myriad of possibilities that may happen.

Locating Objects:

- Participants may use a variety of means to locate objects. This includes memorizing positions; using binoculars, books or star charts for star hopping. The use of setting circles, either analog or digital is also permissible. GO-TO telescopes can also be used.

### Multiple Observers:

- Some times there are two observers per telescope. The condition is that each observer should find one-half the objects and both must observe all objects.
- Three or more observers per telescope can't qualify for an award. It is possible to do the marathon this way, but none are eligible for awards.

### Multiple Instruments:

- Participants using two or more instruments are eligible for only one award. This is not to be construed as one award for each instrument, it is one award for the observer.

### Registration:

- The only form of registration is a) an observing list used to record your observations. Be sure to get an observation list. You can also print one from our web site or make up your own.

### **More Marathon Information**

- A description of the object is not necessary, especially since it will take precious time needed to find the remaining objects.
- Study the list sequences, or use your own. Be prepared for the extremely unlikely case it should become cloudy and the selected sequence cannot be followed.
- Although it is possible to do the marathon with a 4-inch telescope, or smaller, or binoculars, it is not suggested unless you are an experienced observer.

[I found this on the web and thought it worth adding here - Sean Dunne.]