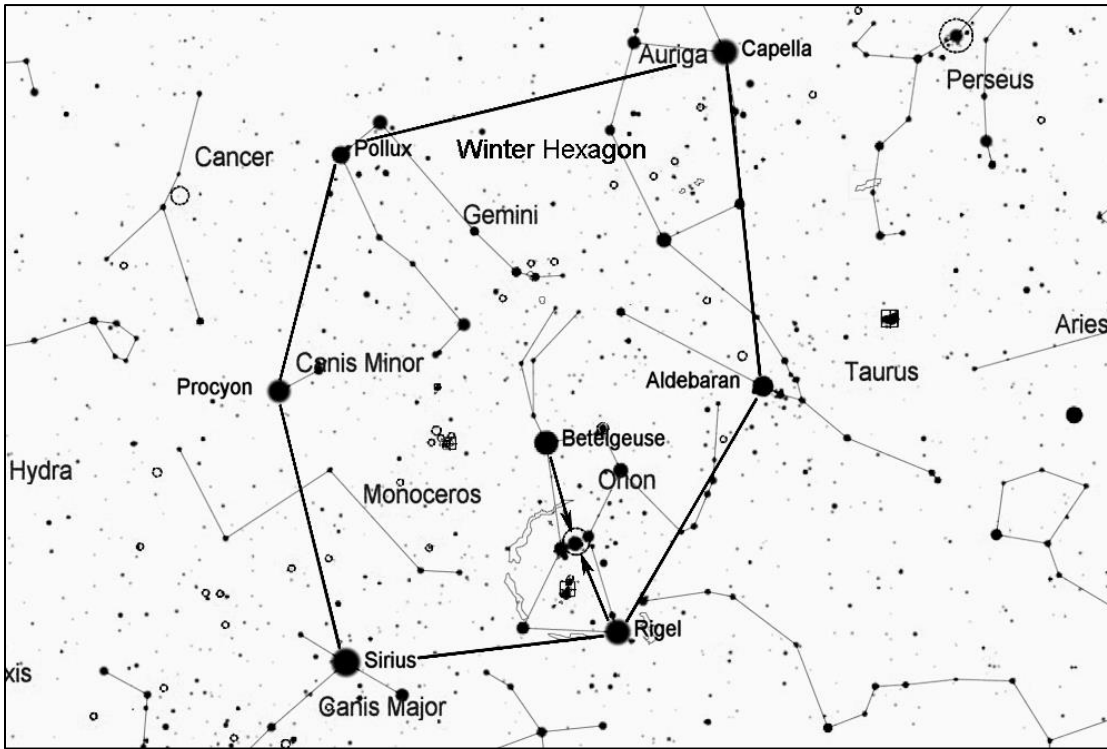


# Keid (Omicron 2 Eridani), Triple Star

Many stars in the sky are much larger and brighter than our Sun, but not these. This trio is just 16 light years away. The brightest of the three is a yellow-orange star that is slightly smaller than the Sun and 40% as bright. The next brightest is a white dwarf that is just 50% larger than the Earth in diameter! The dimmest of the three is a red dwarf, and it is actually larger in diameter than the white dwarf. The red and white dwarfs are about 35 astronomical units apart, a bit farther than the distance from the Sun to Neptune.



If you don't know how to find the constellation Orion, first find the Winter Hexagon, which is composed of six of the brightest stars in the sky-- Sirius, Procyon, Pollux, Capella, Aldebaran, and Rigel. On mid-winter evenings, these stars form a large oval stretching from low in the south to nearly overhead. As spring begins, the Winter Hexagon sinks toward the west. The constellation Orion and its bright red star Betelgeuse are inside the Hexagon.

Between Betelgeuse and Rigel is a row of three bright stars that form the belt of Orion.

Visualize an arrow pointing to the west across the two "feet" of Orion (Saiph and Rigel). Extend that arrow about twice as far beyond Rigel and you will come to two 4th magnitude stars (Beid and Keid), the brightest stars in that area of the sky. The dimmer one, to the southeast, is Keid.

