

# Night Sky Viewing at Widener University

## May 2026

### Sunrise & Sunset Times (EDT)

	Sunrise	Sunset
Begin Month	6:02 am	7:56 pm
End Month	5:35 am	8:23 pm

### Lunar Phases



### Naked-Eye Planets in the Evening & Morning Sky this Month

**Mercury** (*in Pisces-Aries-Taurus*): Mercury is too closely aligned with the Sun to view in the first half of May; it reaches superior conjunction with the Sun on May 14<sup>th</sup>. During the second half of the month, Mercury vaults into the evening sky, setting in the west-northwest 1½ hours after the Sun by month's end. Binoculars will help spot Mercury against the twilight glare; it looks like a bright star well below Venus, hovering low above the west-northwestern horizon at dusk.

**Venus** (*in Taurus-Gemini*): There is no mistaking the planet Venus, which is a dazzling yellow beacon hovering above the northwestern horizon during the early evening hours. Throughout May, Venus is viewable after sunset for a generous 2½ hours, setting by 10:20 pm EDT on the 1<sup>st</sup>, and by 11 pm on the 31<sup>st</sup>. As an added dividend, on the evening of May 18<sup>th</sup> the waxing crescent Moon slides just to the right and above Venus, making for a stunning sight.

**Jupiter** (*in Gemini*): Jupiter is ensconced within the constellation Gemini, just below Gemini's brightest stars Pollux and Castor. The Giant Planet, which resembles a glorious golden star, stands high in the southwest at nightfall during May. Jupiter sets in the northwest at 1 am EDT on the 1<sup>st</sup>, and by 11:30 pm on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Jupiter will adorn the evening sky from spring through mid-summer, over which time it will slowly sink into the evening twilight, eventually reaching conjunction with the Sun at the end of July. A telescope will reveal Jupiter's 4 largest moons, cloud bands, and Great Red Spot.

**Saturn** (*in Cetus*): Saturn, which was in conjunction with the Sun at the end of March, is now emerging from the dawn twilight. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, Saturn rises by 4:45 am EDT, or only one hour before sunrise. As the month progresses, Saturn climbs out of the dawn glow, so that by the 31<sup>st</sup>, Saturn will be rising at 3 am – an ample 2½ hours before sunrise. On the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup>, a slender crescent Moon hangs above Saturn.

**Mars** (*in Pisces-Aries*): Mars has spent the past four months submerged in the Sun's glare following solar conjunction back in January. This May the Red Planet follows Saturn in emerging from the dawn twilight. Mars rises by 5 am EDT, or less than an hour before sunrise, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and by 4 am, or 1½ hours before sunrise, on May 31<sup>st</sup>. On the morning of May 14<sup>th</sup>, a thin sliver of the waning crescent Moon slides above Mars and to the left of Saturn.

**Eta Aquarid Meteor Shower**: Peaks in early morning hours of May 6<sup>th</sup>. Source: tiny particles from Halley's Comet. Unfortunately, the bright waning gibbous Moon will hamper seeing the fainter meteors.

### Constellations & Bright Stars Visible Around 9:30 pm EDT in May

**Auriga** – low in NW  
Bright star *Capella*

**Canis Minor** – setting in SSW  
Bright star *Procyon*

**Gemini** – getting low in WNW  
Bright stars *Pollux, Castor*

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Planets Venus, Jupiter

**Leo** – high in SW  
Bright star *Regulus*

**Virgo** – up in S  
Bright star *Spica*

**Ursa Major** – high in N, nearly overhead  
Asterism *Big Dipper*, w/ pointer stars *Merak, Dubhe*;  
handle stars *Alioth, Mizar (& Alcor), Alkaid*

**Ursa Minor** – a little over halfway up in N  
Asterism *Little Dipper*, contains *Polaris* (North Star)

**Hydra** – extends below Leo & Virgo in S & SW  
Bright star *Alphard* ("the Solitary One"), to lower right of *Regulus*

**Boötes** – high in S, nearly overhead  
Bright star *Arcturus*

**Corona Borealis** – high in SSE  
To upper left of *Arcturus*

**Lyra** – up in NE, getting higher  
Bright star *Vega*

**Scorpius** – rising (after about 10 pm) in SE  
Bright star *Antares*

For more information on the night sky, visit the Widener Observatory Stargazing website at [www.widener.edu/stargazing/](http://www.widener.edu/stargazing/). A set of free sky maps can be obtained at [www.skymaps.com/](http://www.skymaps.com/).