

Conjunction of the Moon with Mars

On the evenings of **April 4 & 5**, the waxing, gibbous Moon, moving through the zodiac constellation Gemini, will appear to pass our neighboring planet Mars. On these nights, Mars is some 110 million miles, or 10 light minutes, behind the Moon.

Joining this conjunction are the two bright stars that represent the heads of the Gemini twins, Pollux and Castor. Although these two bright heavenly stars appear adjacent in the skies above, they are otherwise quite different.

Your unaided eyes will tell you that Pollux not only appears brighter than Castor, but also glows a different color. Can you see Pollux's cooler yellow-orange color, compared to the hot white glow of Castor? Pollux is located nearer to Earth than Castor. Castor's light comes to your eyes from 51 light years ago, while Pollux shines from a closer 34 light years – both very near to us by astronomical standards!

In mythology, these two star names derive from the immortal twin sons of Zeus and Leda.

