How to watch the 2026 Leonids

LEVEL B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. Have you ever seen a shooting star? When and where?
2. What night-sky sights are easiest to see without a telescope?
3. Would you stay up late to see a space event? Why or why not?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

meteor
A bright streak of light made when space dust burns in the sky.

peak
The time when an event is at its strongest or most active.

constellation
A group of stars that forms a pattern with a name, like Leo.

hemisphere
One half of Earth, either north or south of the equator.

radiant
The point in the sky where meteors seem to come from.

fireball
An unusually bright meteor made by a larger piece of dust.

atmosphere
The layer of gases around Earth where meteors burn up.

debris
Small pieces left behind by an object, such as dust from a comet.

III. READING

The Leonid meteor shower reaches its peak on the night of 17-18 November, around 23:45 GMT. The meteors race at about 71km per second and burn as bright streaks. Under clear, dark skies, observers can see up to about 15 an hour at the peak. The shower happens when Earth crosses the debris trail of Comet Tempel-Tuttle.

Tiny bits hit the atmosphere and glow as meteors before they burn up. The Leonids are named for Leo, the constellation where the radiant lies. Leo rises in the east around midnight, but meteors can appear anywhere in the sky. The best viewing is from midnight until dawn.

Go somewhere dark, avoid city lights, and let your eyes adjust. A first-quarter moon sets around midnight, so later hours are darker. The Leonids are visible from both hemispheres, usually better in the north. They are famous for fast fireballs and, in some years, storms.

There were storms in 1833 and 1966, and strong displays in 1999, 2001 and 2002. The comet returns near the sun about every 33 years, with the next pass in 2031.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **Al Jazeera***: "Leonid meteor shower 2026: When and where to...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When does the Leonid shower peak, and at what time in GMT?
2. What makes the Leonids happen in Earth's sky?
3. Where is the radiant, and when does it rise?
4. What should watchers do to improve their view?
5. Where can people see the Leonids, and where is it better?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever watched a meteor shower? What was it like?
2. Where near you could you find a dark sky for stargazing?
3. Do you like staying up late for events like this? Why or why not?
4. Which space events interest you most, and why?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Should have

Use should have + past participle to say a past action was a mistake or to express regret/criticism. Negative: shouldn't have + past participle.

"You **should have checked** *the peak time before going out."*

"They **shouldn't have used** *phones; it ruined their night vision."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should have or shouldn't have + past participle.

1. We left too early; we (wait) ___ until after midnight. _____
2. He used his phone; he (not/look) ___ at the screen. _____
3. They stood by streetlights; they (find) ___ darker skies. _____
4. It was cloudy; we (read) ___ the forecast first. _____
5. She saw very little; she (give) ___ her eyes time to adjust. _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8 minutes warm-up, 8-10 minutes vocabulary, 12 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 8-10 minutes grammar, 12 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach or check: meteor, peak, constellation, radiant, hemisphere, debris, fireball, atmosphere; note that GMT is a time zone.
- Reading and comprehension: set a skim task for key facts (when, where, how many), then scan for details (speed, moon, tips). Pair-check answers before brief whole-class feedback.
- Differentiation: stronger students plan a short viewing schedule from the text; others underline viewing tips and share a two-sentence plan.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. If students give very short answers, ask for one detail: where, how many, or who they were with.
2. Have students mark a nearby dark spot on a map app, then compare choices and travel times in pairs.
3. Take a quick show of hands, then group night-owls with early sleepers to share reasons and advice.
4. Prompt examples: eclipses, comets, space launches, ISS passes. Ask why each one appeals.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word “How to watch the Leonids” guide for your city, using details from the text.

Presentation: In small groups, prepare a 1-minute plan for a class stargazing trip: time, place, and what to bring.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Should have

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When does the Leonid shower peak, and at what time in GMT?
   On 17-18 November, around 23:45 GMT.
2. What makes the Leonids happen in Earth's sky?
   Earth crosses Comet Tempel-Tuttle's debris, which burns in the atmosphere.
3. Where is the radiant, and when does it rise?
   In the constellation Leo; it rises in the east around midnight.
4. What should watchers do to improve their view?
   Go to a dark place, avoid city lights, and let eyes adjust.
5. Where can people see the Leonids, and where is it better?
   From both hemispheres, with better conditions in the north.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should have or shouldn't have + past participle.

1. We left too early; we ___ until after midnight. **should have waited**
2. He used his phone; he ___ at the screen. **shouldn't have looked / should not have looked**
3. They stood by streetlights; they ___ darker skies. **should have found**
4. It was cloudy; we ___ the forecast first. **should have read**
5. She saw very little; she ___ her eyes time to adjust. **should have given**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use should have + past participle to say a past action was a mistake or to express regret/criticism. Negative: shouldn't have + past participle. (Examples constructed.)

*"You **should have checked** the peak time before going out."*

*"They **shouldn't have used** phones; it ruined their night vision."*