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W04 - Classify that star: H-R Diagram Workshop

Tuesday, 24 November 2026 13:00 (1 hour)

The Hertzsprung-Russel Diagram is one of the most powerful tools astronomers have in their arsenal to classify the stars we can observe using limited information. Stellar life-cycle, lifetime of a main-sequence star, cluster classification, isochrone curve, and many other astronomical concepts are built upon this simple concept of a diagram. However, many students find this diagram intimidating and confusing. While many attempts are made to help navigate students through the relationships between different parameters along the diagram, the instructions often ignore the single most important aspect that is in most students' minds: "Why?"

In this workshop activities, a simple analogy is used to help students understand not the "What" the H-R Diagram is, but the "Why" was H-R diagram was created the first place. Students are then introduced to learning "why" this tools remain among the most powerful tools we have to understand the stars in the night sky. By spending a bit of time to understand the "why", the "what" can follows much more naturally now that the learners are engaged in the topic.

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