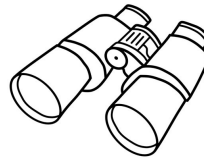


# What telescope is best for me?

★ *The best telescope for you is the one that you will use!* ★

## 1 Consider trying binoculars first.

- ★ Easy to use, easy to store, ultra-portable.
- ★ Can see large sections of the sky at once.
- ★ Can use them for daytime activities.



An excellent size is 10 x 50:  
10 = magnification  
50 = the diameter in millimeters of the front lens.

## 2 Before you buy a telescope, ask yourself these questions...

- ★ How well do you know the night sky? Finding objects is not easy without practice. A quality "go-to" computerized telescope is costly and its operation must be mastered.
- ★ How hard is the scope to assemble? If it is too complicated, you won't use it.
- ★ Where will you do most of your observing? A city resident will likely need to cart it to a dark site.
- ★ Where do you think you'll be in the hobby in three years? If you really like astronomy, you'll outgrow a small scope in six months.
- ★ Will you eventually pursue astrophotography? You'll need a sturdy, motor driven mount that tracks accurately.

### ★ Telescope Diameter Dilemma ★

Since most sky objects are relatively dim, a telescope needs to gather large amounts of light. Therefore, larger diameter telescopes are better than smaller ones. However, they are also bulkier – and less likely to make it outside in cold weather!

## 3 Telescope and observing tips:

- ★ Magnification – low power is used for most objects.
- ★ Finder scope – a small one is nearly useless.
- ★ The larger the telescope's diameter, the better views it gives, but the less portable it is.
- ★ If the scope has poor optics or a wobbly mount, it will be frustrating to use. Hence, it won't be used.
- ★ Finding celestial objects requires practice and patience.
- ★ Never point the telescope at the sun without the proper filter installed ON THE FRONT of the scope.
- ★ Don't expect what you see in the eyepiece to closely resemble what you see in photographs.

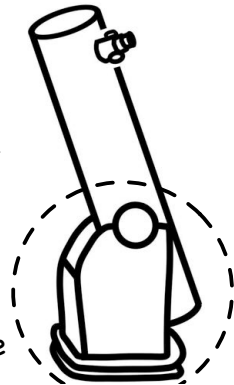
## 4 Visit your local amateur astronomy club!

- ★ You can see and try the various sizes and types of telescopes.
- ★ Some clubs have programs for lending telescopes. [www.taas.org](http://www.taas.org)
- ★ Members will be happy to guide you through the scope selection process.

## ★ Common Telescope Designs ★

### Reflector

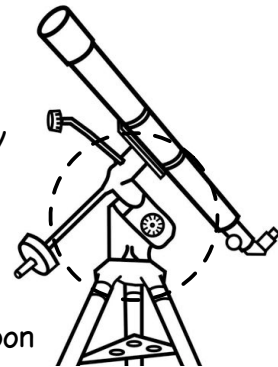
- ★ Easy to use
- ★ Least expensive scope design
- ★ Great for clusters, nebulae, and galaxies
- ★ Can be bulky
- ★ Generally not suitable for astrophotography



Shown with a Dobsonian Mount (Alt-Az)

### Refractor

- ★ Easy to use
- ★ Tend to be costly
- ★ Not suitable for dim objects
- ★ Can be used for astrophotography
- ★ Great for the moon and planets



Shown with an Equatorial Mount (German or GEM)

### Schmidt-Cassegrain

- ★ Portable, but heavy
- ★ Tend to be costly
- ★ Suitable for astrophotography
- ★ All purpose scope



Shown with an Equatorial Fork Mount



The Astronomical League  
[www.astroleague.org/outreach](http://www.astroleague.org/outreach)