



TIPS FOR TELESCOPE BUYING

Excited to explore the night sky, but not sure what type of telescope you need? The experts at the National Air and Space Museum's Phoebe Waterman Haas Public Observatory are here to help:

- 1 If you're a beginner, don't buy a telescope just yet! Sky maps or good binoculars are a better way to start exploring.
- 2 Look for binoculars with high optical quality, magnifications between 7x and 10x, and lenses at least 35mm in diameter. Small, rugged, and waterproof binoculars are perfect for kids.
- 3 Visit your local observatory or amateur astronomy club during a stargazing event to try out different telescope options before you commit.
- 4 Telescopes that cost less than \$300 are often not worth the investment—binoculars are a better alternative.
- 5 The most important part of a telescope is the diameter of its main mirror, or lens. The bigger the telescope, the more light it collects, which allows you to see dimmer objects. A good first telescope has a lens diameter of 3 to 6 inches.
- 6 Avoid any telescope advertised for its magnifying power.

- 7 A popular first telescope is a Dobsonian because they're easy to use and offer large apertures for relatively low prices.
- 8 A tabletop telescope is a good option for a young future astronomer because they're portable, easy to use, and virtually indestructible.
- 9 Telescopes need a mount like a sturdy tripod or a Dobsonian base to hold it steady for observing.

When you're ready, point your telescope to the sky. The Moon is a great first target, especially when it's half-lit—look for craters along the shadow line.



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