

The Hubble Telescope - literacy task

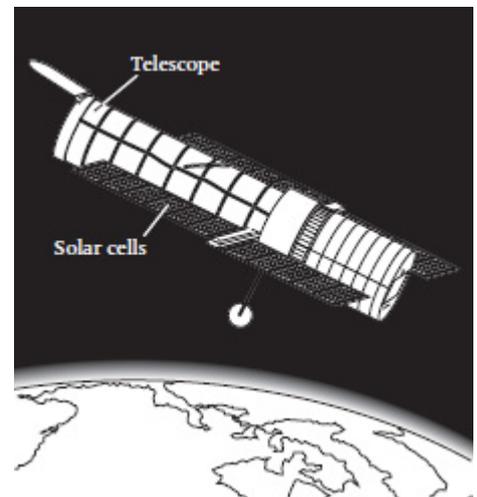
The Hubble telescope has allowed us to get clear images of the night sky bettering our understanding of what is out there and how it got there.

When you look at stars on a clear, dark night, some appear to twinkle. This happens because the light from the stars has to travel through the Earth's atmosphere. Air currents bend the light and make the stars twinkle.

Twinkling stars are a nuisance for astronomers who are trying to study them using telescopes. Clouds can also stop astronomers getting good images of the stars. To get around this problem, most big telescopes are built on high mountains. There is less air between the telescope and the stars, so there is less 'twinkling'. Mountain tops are quite often above the clouds, so the astronomers can watch the stars more often.

There is an even better way to look at the stars. In 1990, a brand-new telescope was sent into space. This new telescope, called the Hubble Space Telescope, can be controlled from the Earth's surface. The pictures it takes are sent to Earth in the same way that pictures are transmitted to your TV set. The only problem with the telescope is that if it goes wrong it is very expensive to repair. The Space Shuttle has to make a special flight to fix it.

The Hubble Telescope has given astronomers some of the best ever views of the Solar System, stars and distant galaxies.



Questions

- ① The Hubble telescope has been in orbit for numerous years now. Research some of the images taken by the telescope and how they helped better our understanding of space.
- ② Name two problems astronomers have when looking at space from Earth?
- ③ What are the advantages and disadvantages of having telescopes in space?
- ④ The Hubble telescope is named after a famous person. Who is it and what did he do?
- ⑤ Do you agree with governments allocating money to space research? Explain your response.