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# Discovering The Essential Universe



## Synopsis

Neil Comins's *Discovering the Universe* confronts the challenges of the one-term astronomy course by heightening student curiosities about the cosmos, by using the context of astronomy to teach the process of science, and by highlighting common misconceptions and showing students how to think their way past them. With its signature combination of vivid writing and spectacular images, the new edition offers new findings, new study help, and an expanded new media/supplements package centered on W.H. Freeman's breakthrough online course space, LaunchPad. See what's in the LaunchPad

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Neil F. Comins is a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Maine and author of popular scientific books, articles, and textbooks. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell and a Ph.D. in astrophysics from University College, Cardiff, Wales. He is the author of *What If the Earth Had Two Moons?*

As an amateur astronomer of 40 years I bought this used book as a backup book for my observatory for our astronomy club members and my family to use. William J. Kaufmann and Neil F. Comins wrote a very good book. Easy to read and lots of great questions for the astronomy student to tackle. William has a good style that reads well, not super advanced technical that would be very good for a senior high school student or freshman college course. Some math and formulas but not too difficult. Lots of great pictures. The book keeps your interest and makes you want to read more

as you learn each topic. I liked the astronomers toolbox where specific astronomy tools and formulas to compute various equations. Also in the back is a great appendix listing data on the planets and their satellites as well as the nearest and visually brightest stars....a great quick reference. Some of the various topics discussed ( There are more) are Discovering astronomy, Discovering the night sky, Earthly cycles, Eclipses, Gravitation, Origins of the Sun centered universe, Kepler's and Newton's Laws ( done very well and important!), Light and telescopes, Optics and telescopes, Radio Astronomy, Spectra, Atoms, The Solar System, The evolution of stars and their life cycles, galaxies, quasars, The expanding universe vs. the steady state. This is only a partial selection. The authors wrote much more and covered all the important bases. A great read for the average layman without getting too technical. As I said great for a senior high school student or college student taking astronomy 101. I checked out the supplied free Starry Nights Discovering The Universe Software 5.0 software. It loaded well on my MS Vista laptop. However I was not impressed with it. Not able to get full screen Messier objects, galaxies, clusters and planets all at one time. I know this is the freebie software and you can get the upgrade Starry Night Pro for \$59 on line. I like my Sky 6 Bisque planetarium software much better. The newer edition is probably better with updates and more info on newer found exoplanets. This older edition at low cost is fine as a backup reference book and a book for students to answer both regular and more advanced astronomy questions. Would of given 5 stars but the free software was just so so...maybe 3 stars tops. Together the package 4 stars. Try to get the later edition at low cost. If not able to, this older edition is fine as much of the material is still good and will not change. Maybe more information needed on new exoplanets. A good backup observatory book and study guide. 4 stars and recommended.

Love this book, very insightful, well introduced for me to understand. I grew a unique interest in Astronomy as it is very down to earth in breaking down the terminology and understanding of the universe and it's planets. It's not boring, nor is it difficult to understand. The review questions at the end of every chapter help you retain the information more for future exams.

This was the assigned text for a college Astronomy class I took. I really enjoy the book. It is well written, easy to read, yet provides a lot of information. It's a rare college text that is actually interesting to just sit down and read and flip through. Great photography and illustrations throughout. I will be keeping this book for personal reference. One note: Older reviews say the book comes with a CD that includes an electronic copy of the book and/or StarryNight software. The 2014 (10th edition) paperback does not come with any CD but if you look carefully inside the book's

Preface you can find at the companion web site which includes some extra slides, flashcards, quizzes, star charts, etc. The book also says you can request a download key for StarryNight but I haven't figure out how/where you are supposed to do that yet. An electronic copy of the book is not included anymore and you'd have to buy the premium electronic textbook as far as I can tell.

This beautiful, full-color, highly-informative textbook has been great for my Astronomy class. Completely up-to-date (well, with the exception of the possible two new planets, one of which has been confirmed only recently and definitely since the text's Spring 2005 publication), it teaches astronomy equally well to the physics major and the humanities student (such as myself) who is taking the class for a science credit. The authors present the information in a fun way and introduce terms simply for the student. Supplemental material includes an excellent computer program, Starry Night, as well as web resources for reviewing the text material for tests. I highly recommend this text! (And so, of course, does my Astronomy teacher)

I had to buy this book for my astronomy class this summer and my student bookstore was selling it for a MERE \$80. Please stand by while I weep tears of BLOOD because I'm poor. My boyfriend suggested checking the internet and it was to the rescue. I was able to get it for super cheap and above that, it's really an excellent book. It's colorful, INFORMATIVE!!, and kept me interested. I'd really suggest this to anyone either taking an astronomy class or someone who's just interested in space in general. This is an excellent resource: it has lists of dates for upcoming meteor showers (for years to come), explanations for everything you could ever dream of or ask (including time travel and possibilities therein), and glossy, beautiful pictures and diagrams (easy to follow and understand)

This is a great textbook for an undergraduate student taking an introductory astronomy course. It would also be a good book for someone wanting to learn about astronomy on their own outside of a formal course. The author's style is easy to read and the illustrations and images aid in learning the material. Highly recommended.

What can I say, it's a book. New as advertised

Astronomy was great with this text.

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