

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Science and the Universe - A Brief Tour

Such discoveries are what make astronomy such an exciting field for scientists and many others—but you will explore much more than just the objects in our universe and the latest discoveries about them. We will pay equal attention to the *process* by which we have come to understand the realms beyond Earth and the tools we use to increase that understanding. We gather information about the cosmos from the messages the universe sends our way. Because the stars are the fundamental building blocks of the universe, decoding the message of starlight has been a central challenge and triumph of modern astronomy. By the time you have finished reading this text, you will know a bit about how to read that message and how to understand what it is telling us.

[1.1: The Nature of Astronomy](#)

[1.2: The Nature of Science](#)

[1.3: The Laws of Nature](#)

[1.4: Numbers in Astronomy](#)

[1.5: Consequences of Light Travel Time](#)

[1.6: A Tour of the Universe](#)

[1.7: The Universe on the Large Scale](#)

[1.8: The Universe of the Very Small](#)

[1.9: A Conclusion and a Beginning](#)

[1.E: Science and the Universe - A Brief Tour \(Exercises\)](#)

Thumbnail: A photograph of galaxy NGC 6744, which might resemble the Milky Way. (CC BY-SA 3.0; <http://www.eso.org/public/images/eso1118a/>)

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