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Book Review: The Amateur Astronomer's Introduction to the Celestial Sphere

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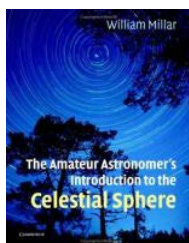
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The amateur astronomer's introduction to the celestial sphere



Millar, William. Cambridge, 2006

299p, 052167123X \$40.00, 9780521671231 \$40.00

LC Call Number: [QB64](#)

Millar (Grand Rapids Community College) offers the first of five short volumes aimed at the beginning amateur who needs a primer on how the night sky works before heading out to the back yard with an expensive new telescope. In seven of its eight chapters, the book gently but quickly leads the reader through coordinate systems, constellations, magnitudes, the diurnal and seasonal motions of the sky, and time-keeping and other essential concepts, using a minimum of mathematical concepts, simple line drawings, and concise prose. No expensive color plates, foldouts, or distracting sidebars here; Millar sticks to the basics. The final chapter contains 10 easy observational projects that can be done with simple devices constructed from standard office supplies. The projects might suffice as the lab component of a 10-15-week observational astronomy course for first-year nonscience majors. However, Millar's book would not be suitable as a stand-alone text in general astronomy, nor is it intended to be used that way because it contains only essential concepts that can be discovered by naked eye observations. The book might well have been titled "The Night Sky for Dummies" because it is meant for the self-motivated beginner.

Summing Up: Recommended. General readers; lower-division undergraduates; two-year technical program students.

Reviewer: [T. D. Oswalt](#), Florida Institute of Technology

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: General Readers, Lower-division Undergraduates, Two-Year Technical Program Students

Interdisciplinary Subjects: