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Book Review: The Observer's Guide to Planetary Motion: Explaining the Cycles of the Night Sky

T. D. Oswalt

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, oswaltt1@erau.edu

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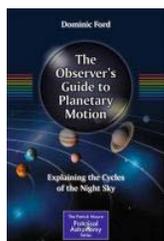
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The observer's guide to planetary motion : explaining the cycles of the night sky



Ford, Dominic. Springer, 2014

240p index afp, 9781493906284 \$34.99

LC Call Number: [QB601](#)

Just when one thinks that he or she has seen every kind of introductory astronomy book available, along comes this unique contribution by astronomer Ford (British science radio producer/presenter; formerly, Univ. of Cambridge). This concise little primer, part of "The Patrick Moore Practical Astronomy" series, takes a refreshing pragmatic approach to understanding the motions that any casual observer of the night sky will eventually notice. Plenty of observer-centered charts and diagrams help visualize in three dimensions what motions in the sky can be seen with simple observations and a little patience. The book is probably not the best choice for a traditional introductory astronomy textbook, but each section does provide a self-contained tutorial with a fresh new perspective and clear examples that introductory astronomy teachers will find useful. Ford uses these basic concepts to outline how spacecraft missions have been planned, what scientists have learned from them, how planets outside the solar system have been detected, and where Earth fits into the larger structure of the Milky Way galaxy. The book also contains some very useful tables listing several decades of lunar phases, eclipses, planetary transits, planetary configurations, etc. That alone makes it a reference well worth having long after the basics have been mastered.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries.

Reviewer: [T. D. Oswalt](#), Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Recommendation: Highly recommended

Readership Level: All Readership Levels, General Readers, Lower-division Undergraduates, Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Two-Year Technical Program Students, Professionals/Practitioners