

FACTSHEET

SPACE EXPLORATION

- All early civilizations studied the night sky, for example the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the ancient Chinese, the Mayan people of South America. Even Stonehenge was probably for studying the sky.
- Hans Lippershey from the Netherlands, built the first telescope in 1608.
- Galileo, from Italy, was one of the first people to use a telescope to study the night sky. He first recorded his observations in 1609–1610.
- Edwin Hubble, an American, was the first person to show us that there are other galaxies. The Hubble telescope is named after him.
- Robert Oppenheimer is another famous astronomer. He helped us to understand more about black holes and neutron stars.
- Telescopes collect light and other kinds of energy from objects in space, record it and then use it to make images which help us find out more about the stars and planets. Some telescopes are put in space and others are put on Earth.
- Earth telescopes have been used for 400 years; space telescopes have been used in the last 40 years.
- Space probes are designed to investigate particular planets or targets. Some fly past their target, others orbit their targets and some land on their targets. We have landed space probes on the Moon, Mars, Venus and the asteroid Eros.
- We have been sending rockets into space since 1957.
- The first people went into space in 1961.
- Edwin Aldrin and Neil Armstrong were the first astronauts to land on the Moon on 20 July 1969. They were from the crew of Apollo 11.
- The International Space Station (ISS) is 230 miles/370 km above Earth. It is being built and used by 16 countries. Crews have lived on the ISS since 2000. They conduct experiments and see how things behave in space.



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