

Louisiana PASS



Image of the Hubble telescope courtesy of NASA

The Hubble Space Telescope

Have you ever wondered how astronomers have so much knowledge about the universe when they haven't been able to travel that far? The Hubble Space Telescope is one tool that astronomers use to learn about other planets, galaxies, and space in general. This telescope is unlike any you have ever used.

Named after the great American astronomer Edwin Powell Hubble, the Hubble Space Telescope is an amazing invention. The Hubble was built in the late 1970s and early 1980s at a cost of more than \$1.5 billion! It is 43.5 feet long (about the length of a school bus), and weighs 24, 500 lbs. It is located 370 miles above the earth and is operated by engineers and astronomers from different locations on earth. The Hubble Telescope orbits around the earth every 97 minutes.

Thanks to the Hubble, we have knowledge about our universe that we would otherwise not have. The operation of the Hubble is a complex process. In a nutshell: technicians at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland send commands to the Hubble using special equipment such as ground antennas and orbiting satellites. The Hubble gathers the necessary information and transmits it back to the orbiting satellites as radio signals. Voilà! Astronomers gain new knowledge about the universe!

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