



# Topic Review

A Level Year 2 AQA Physics

Topic 9: Astrophysics

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# Teacher's Introduction

This Topic Review covers the optional unit Section 3.9: Astrophysics of the AQA Physics A Level. The aim is to go over the topics in the specification in a focused but comprehensive way, allowing students to consolidate their learning and to prepare for the exams. The resource includes questions after each small topic to allow students to test their understanding and ability to apply what they have learnt. Worked answers are included with the questions so that students can check their answers and see where they've gone wrong.

## Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

Each section of the review starts with a checklist of all the topics in the section, and what students should expect to know about the topic before moving on. This can be used as a self-assessment tool at the start of revision, so that students know where to focus their time, or at the end to ensure they have no gaps in their learning.

Worked examples for calculations are provided throughout (including derivations where appropriate), giving students not only knowledge of the appropriate facts and equations, but how they are applied as well.

Exam-style questions are provided, so that students can test their knowledge and practise for their upcoming exams. These exam-style questions have worked mark schemes in the same style as those used by the exam board, so that students can check their own answers and see where they've gone wrong.



Key equations and definitions are highlighted with a key symbol.



Equations on the data booklet are marked with a star so that students know what they have to memorise and what they can refer to the data book for in the exam.



Exam tips are included regularly throughout to help students avoid misconceptions and common mistakes and to give students a steer on things they should particularly practise in revision.

Students should be able to work through this review in their own time, after they have completed the topic in lessons, or during revision, and it is a great accompaniment for students as they make their revision notes or where they need an easy reference text as they do practice papers.

I hope that this review will be of real benefit.

## Free Updates!

Register your email address to receive any future free updates\* made to this resource or other Physics resources your school has purchased, and details of any promotions for your subject.

\* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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# 9.1 Telescopes

## Chapter 9.1 checklist

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

### 9.1.1

- Understand the difference between converging and diverging lenses .....
- Recognise and sketch ray diagrams showing image formation in a telescope .....
- Calculate magnifications of telescopes consisting of two converging lenses .....
- Understand and calculate the focal lengths of telescopes consisting of two converging lenses .....

### 9.1.2

- Describe Cassegrain arrangements of reflecting telescopes .....
- Recognise and sketch ray diagrams of light passing through Cassegrain telescopes .....
- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of reflecting and refracting telescopes .....
- Explain and understand what is meant by spherical and chromatic aberration .....

### 9.1.3

- Describe similarities and differences between radio and optical telescopes .....
- Understand how telescopes' structures and positions affect their abilities to observe .....
- Compare resolving and collecting powers of telescopes .....

### 9.1.4

- Understand why telescopes have a minimum useful resolution .....
- Calculate the Rayleigh criterion .....
- Understand how the collecting power of a telescope depends on the telescope .....
- Understand how charge-coupled devices (CCDs) are used in telescopes .....
- Compare resolution and efficiency of CCDs and the human eye .....

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## 9.1.1 Astronomical telescope consisting of two converging lenses

The earliest telescopes were all refracting telescopes. These are telescopes that magnify the light from stars and other celestial objects.

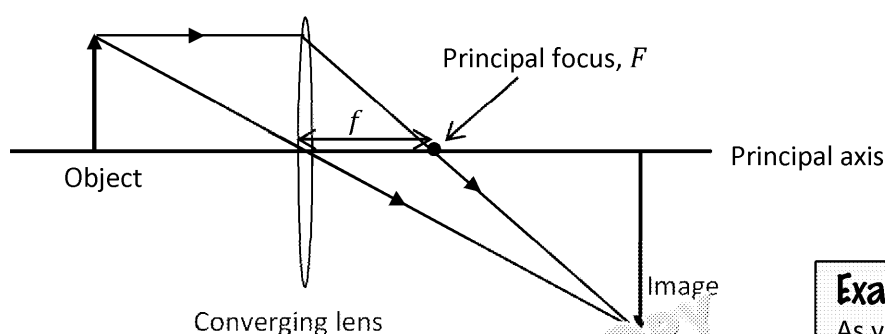
### Lenses

Lenses are either **convergent** or **divergent**.

#### Key Terms:

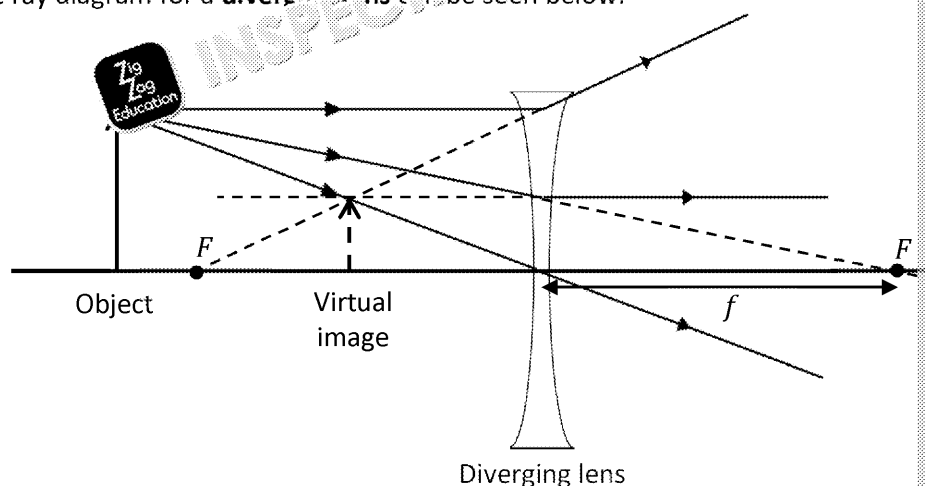
**Convex lens:** A lens which brings parallel beams of light to a point.  
**Convex lenses** are converging lenses.  
**Concave lens:** A lens which spreads out parallel beams of light.  
**Concave lenses** are diverging lenses.

The ray diagram for a **converging lens** can be seen below.



**Exam tip**  
 As you move the object further from the lens, the image produced is **inverted**.

The ray diagram for a **diverging lens** can be seen below.



A diverging lens creates a **virtual image**, as the rays of light never actually meet. The virtual image is one that the divergent rays appear to come from.

#### Key Terms:

**Principal focus:** The point at which rays parallel to the principal axis (before the lens) cross the principal axis (after passing through the lens).

$f$  = focal length: the distance between the lens and the principal focus (in m)

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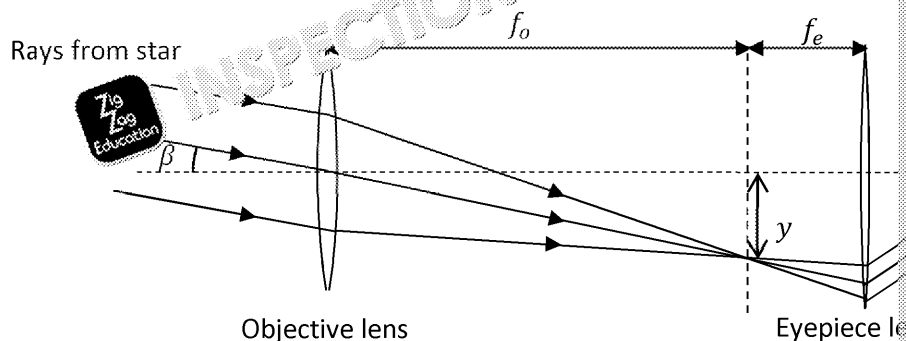


## Normal adjustment

The ray diagram below shows how an image is formed by a refracting telescope in the **normal adjustment**. Telescopes used for viewing stars are in the normal adjustment as the stars are considered to be **at infinity**.

When discussing lenses, 'at infinity' means that the rays are parallel.

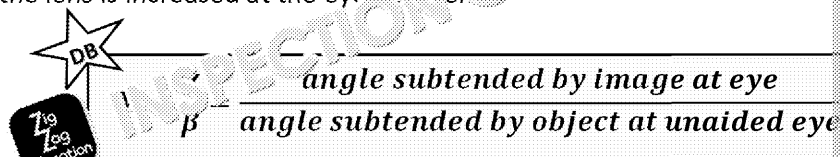
Stars and other objects we see through telescopes are in fact infinitely far away, so the angle between their light rays when they reach the Earth is negligible.



$f_o$  = focal length of the objective lens  
 $f_e$  = focal length of the eyepiece lens  
 $\alpha$  = angle subtended by image at eye  
 $\beta$  = angle subtended by object at unaided eye  
 $f_o + f_e$  = distance between lenses in normal adjustment

## Angular magnification and Focal Lengths

The **angular magnification** of a telescope is the factor by which the angle between rays normal to the lens is increased at the eyepiece.



## Focal lengths

The magnification of the telescope is dependent on the focal length of the lenses.

First define  $\tan \alpha = \frac{y}{f_e}$  and  $\tan \beta = \frac{y}{f_o}$ , which can be found using trigonometry from the ray diagram.

$\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are both small – we can use the small-angle approximation for  $\tan \theta$ .

Using the small-angle approximation gives

$$\alpha = \frac{y}{f_e} \text{ and } \beta = \frac{y}{f_o}$$

Putting this into the equation for magnification gives

$$M = \frac{\alpha}{\beta} = \frac{y/f_e}{y/f_o}$$

which rearranges to

$$M = \frac{f_o}{f_e}$$

### Exam tip

There are several small angles in this diagram. For  $\theta \approx 0$



### Exam tip

For telescopes, the magnification is always positive – a telescope that produces an image smaller isn't much use.

This equation tells us that the focal length of the objective lens must be greater than the focal length of the eyepiece lens so that the magnification is positive. The distance between the lenses in refracting telescopes are very long.

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## Example

A refracting telescope has a magnification of +2.

- The angle subtended by the image of an object at the eye is  $6^\circ$ .  
What is the angle subtended by the object at the unaided eye?
- The focal length of the eyepiece lens of the telescope is 1.5 m.  
What is the minimum total length of the telescope?

a) We first use  $M = \frac{\text{angle subtended by image at eye}}{\text{angle subtended by object at unaided eye}} = \frac{\alpha}{\beta}$

We rearrange this to find the angle subtended by the object at an unaided eye

$$\beta = \frac{\alpha}{M}$$

$$\beta = 3^\circ$$

- The magnification of the telescope is given by  $M = \frac{f_o}{f_e}$

We have the focal length of the eyepiece lens, but not the objective lens.

Rearranging to find the focal length of the objective lens,  $f_o$

$$f_o = f_e M = 1.5 \times 2$$

$$f_o = 3 \text{ m}$$

But we don't want just the focal length of the objective lens! We want the length of the telescope.

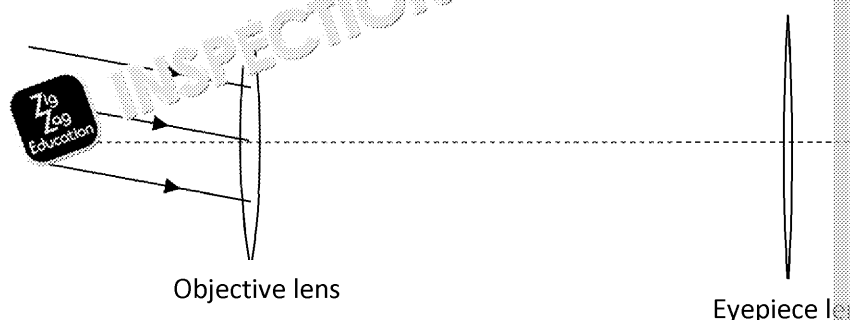
The minimum total length of the telescope is the sum of the focal lengths

$$L_{\min} = f_o + f_e = 1.5 + 3$$

$$L_{\min} = 4.5 \text{ m}$$

## Questions

- Do refracting telescopes use converging or diverging lenses?  
Give a reason for your answer.
- The focal length of the objective lens of the telescope is 15.0 m.
  - Should the focal length of the eyepiece lens be longer or shorter than the objective lens?  
Give a reason for your answer.
  - Calculate the focal length of the eyepiece lens that should be used for a magnification of 2.
  - A star is viewed at an unaided angle of  $8.00^\circ$ .  
Calculate the angle at which the light from the star reaches the eye when viewed through the telescope.
- Complete the diagram below to show light passing through a telescope in normal adjustment. Label the focal length of the objective lens ( $f_o$ ) and the focal length of the eyepiece lens ( $f_e$ ).



## 9.1.2 Reflecting telescopes

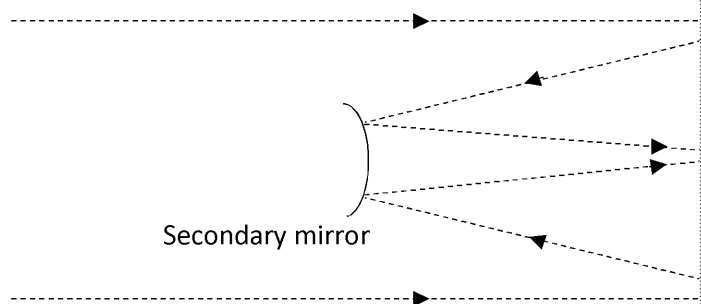
### Key Terms:

A **reflecting telescope** is one that uses **mirrors** instead of lenses to

### Cassegrain arrangement

The Cassegrain arrangement is a system of mirrors used in reflecting telescopes. These arrangements consist of two mirrors: a large parabolic concave primary mirror and a smaller secondary mirror.

A ray diagram showing the path of light through a telescope in the Cassegrain arrangement can be seen below.



The parabolic shape of the primary mirror is used to focus parallel beams of light. A secondary mirror, which then reflects the light back through an aperture in the primary mirror, is used to form the image seen through the eyepiece.

### On reflection

While refracting telescopes are the oldest type of telescope, reflecting telescopes have several advantages over refracting telescopes.

**Size matters:** Refracting telescopes need to be incredibly long, as the total length is at least the length of the eyepiece plus objective lens focal length. Meanwhile, the focal length of reflecting telescopes can be extended without making the telescope longer – additional mirrors can be added to ‘fold’ the light path, extending the focal length without making the telescope longer.

**Crystal clear:** For the best-quality image, high quality glass is needed for refracting telescopes, and expensive to make such large lenses with no defects or imperfections. In comparison, there’s no real difficulty in creating a large smooth mirror for a high-quality reflecting telescope.

**Heavyweights:** The long lengths and large lenses required for refracting telescopes for astronomical events can develop cracks, and it’s difficult to move them in time to catch these events.

**Brace yourself:** Reflecting telescopes are relatively light in comparison to refracting telescopes. It’s easier to move reflecting telescopes to the portion of the sky that you’re observing. Lenses can distort under their own weights, distort the image. Because only the front surface of the mirrors is used in reflecting telescopes, they can be supported from behind without obscuring the image.

**Aberrations:** Reflecting telescopes don’t suffer from **chromatic aberration**, a common problem with refracting telescopes. **Spherical aberration** is also easier to correct in reflecting telescopes.

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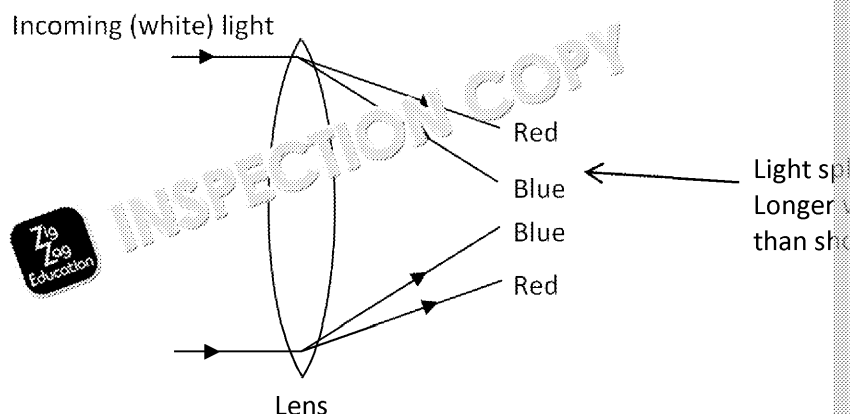




## Chromatic and spherical aberrations

**Chromatic aberrations** occur due to the refraction of coloured light.

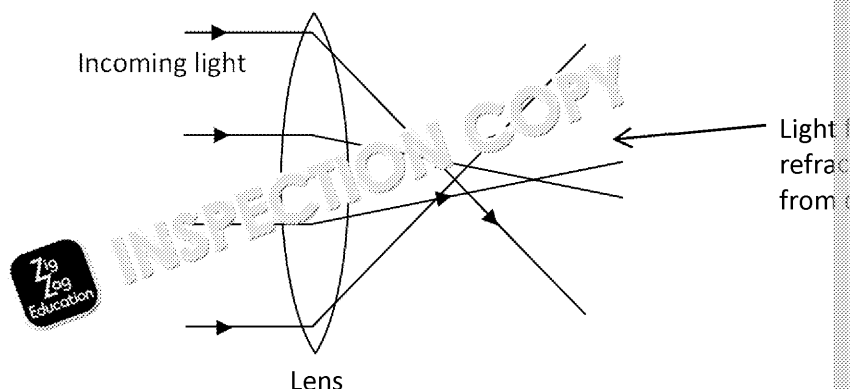
When light passes through a lens, it is split into its component colours; shorter wavelengths refract more than longer wavelengths of light (red light).



Chromatic aberration in refracting telescopes can be corrected by using two lenses with different refractive indexes, which can correct for the effect.

Chromatic aberration doesn't occur at all for reflecting telescopes.

**Spherical aberration** occurs when beams of light passing through the edges of the lens do not focus at the same point as rays passing through the centre of the lens.



Spherical aberration can be minimised by changing the shape of the lens to focus light. Reflecting mirrors can still suffer from spherical aberration, but it's much easier to make a perfectly parabolic mirror.

## Questions

1. Make a list of the advantages of reflecting telescopes over refracting telescopes. Remember: It's important to consider not just the quality of the image, but also the cost and the size of the telescope.
2. Describe chromatic and spherical aberration, including the sources of these aberrations.
3. Complete the diagram opposite to show the path of parallel beams of light through a reflecting telescope in the Cassegrain arrangement.



Secondary mirror

Primary mirror

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### 9.1.3 Single-dish radio telescopes and IR, UV and X-ray telescopes

Telescopes aren't just used for the light we can see! Visible light makes up just a small part of the electromagnetic spectrum and other astronomical objects give off – looking at lower energy light (radio and infrared) (ultraviolet and X-rays) can give us a lot more information about the universe.

For any type of telescope it's important to consider some key factors: what the telescope's **structure** is, what the telescope's **uses** are, and where it's best to **position** it and the telescope's **resolution**.

#### Optical telescopes

##### Uses

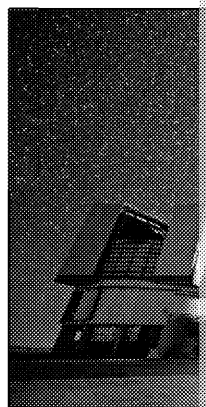


- Optical telescopes can be used to study the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum, roughly **400 to 700 nm**. Optical telescopes can show us things that we can already see in far greater detail, and can see much dimmer objects than the eye can see.

##### Positioning

Although visible light can pass through the atmosphere, it is refracted. This means that, although optical telescopes can be positioned **on the ground**, it's important to try to reduce atmospheric effects.

Many optical telescopes used for scientific research are placed at very **high altitudes** – this reduces the effect of refraction by the atmosphere, including additional refraction from turbulence in the atmosphere where the refractive index of air changes.



Optical telescopes are often placed at high altitudes. The

#### Radio telescopes

Radio signals have much longer wavelengths than visible light – **typically centimetres to metres**.

##### Uses



- Many radio sources can't be seen in the visible range; these include **active galaxies**, **pulsars** and **quasars**. Radio astronomy has been used to study **the Sun** and the **cosmic microwave background**.
- Radio frequencies can penetrate the **gas and dust clouds** that run through the Milky Way, and so radio astronomy can be used to study the **centre of our galaxy**.
- Radio telescopes are particularly useful for studying energy emitted by **neutral hydrogen** – the most abundant element in the universe. The difference between energy states of hydrogen corresponds to 21 cm, a radio wavelength.
- Unlike other ground-based telescopes, radio telescopes can be used both **day and night**.

##### Structure

Radio waves have longer wavelengths than visible light, and so radio dishes can be made using **metal wire frames**. Radio telescopes tend to be in the  **cassegrain arrangement**.

##### Positioning



While very long wavelength radio waves are absorbed by the atmosphere, a window of wavelengths (around 1 cm to 10 m) that pass through. For this reason, radio telescopes can be positioned **on the ground**.

Man-made radio signals can interfere with radio astronomy – radio telescopes are often placed far away from urban centres. There's even a radio silent zone in Australia of 34,000 km<sup>2</sup> just to do radio astronomy away from radio sources!

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## Infrared (IR) telescopes

Infrared light corresponds to wavelengths of light from **0.7 to 1 mm**.

- Uses**
- Infrared astronomy is used to investigate cool regions and objects, such as **interstellar gas**, **nebulae where stars form** and **cool stars**.

**Structure** Infrared telescopes are comprised of lenses and mirrors, like an optical telescope.

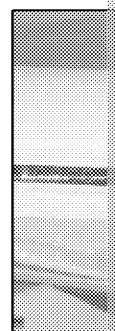
Modern infrared telescopes use solid-state detectors, but early infrared telescopes detected **changes in temperature** caused by the absorption of infrared light.



Infrared telescopes have to be **cooled to very low temperatures** using liquid helium or nitrogen, and have a lot of **thermal insulation** to shield them from external infrared radiation.

**Positioning** Most infrared wavelengths are very strongly absorbed by gases in our atmosphere, particularly water vapour and carbon dioxide. Only a few wavelengths pass through. For this reason, most infrared telescopes are placed on **atmosphere satellites**, but there are some infrared telescopes placed on high-altitude aircraft.

There are two narrow windows (3 to 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and 7 to 14  $\mu\text{m}$ ) where infrared light can pass through the atmosphere – ground-based telescopes can be used to study these.



Infrared astronomy  
altitudes  
NASA's

## Ultraviolet (UV) telescopes

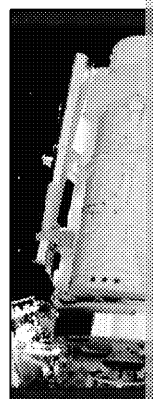
- Uses**
- Ultraviolet light has wavelengths from **400 to 10 nm**.
  - Ultraviolet telescopes can be used to investigate the **chemical composition** and **temperatures** of stars and interstellar gases.
- Ultraviolet astronomy has been used to investigate the **halo of gas around our galaxy** and the **corona around the Sun**.



**Structure** Ultraviolet telescopes are in Cassegrain arrangements.

The detector of an ultraviolet telescope consists of solid-state devices – when ultraviolet photons hit this detector, a current is produced.

**Positioning** Ultraviolet wavelengths are absorbed by the ozone layer, so UV telescopes have to be positioned **in space**.



NASA's Astronomical  
positioning  
absorbed by



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## X-ray and gamma ray telescopes

X-rays have wavelengths of **0.01 to 10 nm**. Wavelengths shorter than  $\sim 10^{-12}$  m are gamma rays.

### Uses

- X-ray and gamma rays have extremely high energies, so come from high-energy events and objects – **binary systems, active galaxies, supernovae remnants and black holes.**

### Structure

X-rays will penetrate mirrors used for other types of astronomy. So X-ray and gamma rays telescopes have to be very smooth.



Gravitational deformation of hyperbolic and parabolic mirrors – X-rays **'skim' the surface** of the mirrors at a low angle, so that they're guided to the detector.

X-rays are detected by **CCDs**, solid-state devices that use high-energy photons to create a current.

### Positioning

X-rays and gamma rays are absorbed by the atmosphere, so both X-ray and gamma ray telescopes have to be positioned **in space**.



NASA's NuSTAR using 133 mirrors

## Power

The image a telescope produces doesn't just depend on the wavelength of light, but also on the size of the telescope. A larger telescope will be able to produce clearer images of an object.

### Resolving power

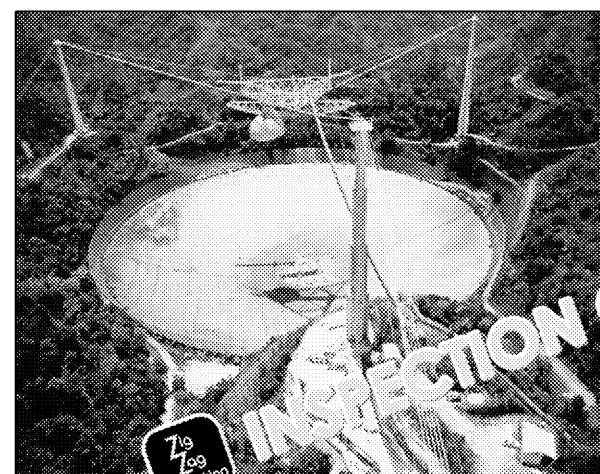
The **resolving power** of a telescope is its ability to distinguish two close together objects can be distinguished by the telescope.



Resolving power is **inversely proportional to wavelength** – longer wavelength light is refracted more by the aperture of the telescope, so the distinctions between objects blur.

So radio telescopes have the worst resolving power and X-ray telescopes have the best.

Two objects with different wavelengths can be resolved by a telescope.



The Arecibo radio telescope has a diameter of over 300 m, increasing its collecting power massively.

### Collecting power

The **collecting power** of a telescope is the **area** of the telescope (or diameter) that it can collect light from.

The collecting power of a telescope dish can be created and supported by a structure that can be easily supported but is difficult to move.

This doesn't mean that large telescopes are in space; for instance, the Hubble Space Telescope has a collecting area of 4.5 m<sup>2</sup>.

The effective size of radio telescopes is increased by using multiple dishes acting as one.

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## Questions

1. The highest altitude ground-based telescope in the world is at the University Observatory (TAO), at 5,640 m above sea level.

What is the advantage of positioning a telescope at such a high altitude?

2. How do UV telescopes detect photons?

3. The Lovell telescope at Jodrell Bank is a radio telescope with a collecting area of 4,200 m<sup>2</sup>. It is located in the village of Goostrey in Cheshire.

What type of electromagnetic radiation is the Lovell telescope likely to study?

4. The James Webb space telescope (due to launch spring 2019) will be an infrared telescope located 1,500,000 km away from Earth with a collecting area of 25 m<sup>2</sup>. The intended study is the formation of galaxies.

Comment on the choices made in the planning of this telescope, including the type of radiation studied and the position of the telescope.

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## 9.1.4 Advantages of large-diameter telescopes

### Angular resolution


#### Key Terms:

The **angular resolution** of a telescope is the ability of the telescope to distinguish between two objects. An angular resolution of, for example,  $x$  radians, means that the telescope can distinguish between two objects subtended by a minimum  $x$  radians. Any two objects closer than this will appear as a single object.

Due to diffraction, light in a telescope is focused into a pattern called an Airy disc. As light passes through the aperture (opening) of the telescope, it diffracts, causing objects to blur.

The size of the Airy disc produced by a telescope gives the telescope's angular resolution. The smaller the Airy disc, the better the resolution. A smaller angular resolution means that smaller or closer together objects can be seen.

The resolution of a telescope is given by the **Rayleigh criterion**



$$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}$$

$\theta$  = angular resolution (in radians)  
 $\lambda$  = wavelength of light  
 $D$  = diameter of the telescope

As you can see, larger-diameter telescopes have a better (smaller) angular resolution, and resolution depends on the wavelength of light captured – shorter wavelengths correspond to a better resolution (as long as you're using the same type of telescope!).



#### Exam tip

$\theta$  is the smallest angle that can be distinguished. It is the angular resolution.

#### Example

- a) The Arecibo radio telescope is 305 m across and mainly studies the 21.0 cm wavelength of radio waves. What is the minimum angle the Arecibo radio telescope can resolve?
- b) Estimate the size of an X-ray telescope with the same resolution as the Arecibo radio telescope.

- a) The minimum resolvable angle of a telescope is given by

$$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}$$

Plugging in numbers

$$\theta \approx \frac{21.0 \times 10^{-2}}{350}$$

$$\theta \approx 6.89 \times 10^{-4} \text{ rad}$$

- b) A typical X-ray has a wavelength of around 0.1 nm.

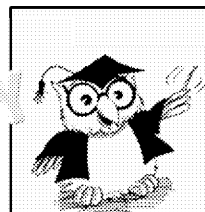
$$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}$$

$$D \approx \frac{\lambda}{\theta}$$

$$D \approx \frac{0.1 \times 10^{-9}}{6.89 \times 10^{-4}}$$

$$D \approx 1.45 \mu\text{m}$$

As you can see, the biggest radio telescopes won't have as good a resolution as X-ray telescopes!



degrees = radians

radians = degrees

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## Collecting power

Collecting power is the amount of light a telescope can gather. A telescope with a larger diameter is able to detect dimmer objects.

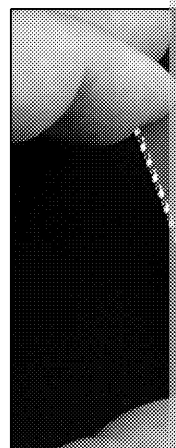
$$\text{Collecting power} \propto \text{diameter}^2$$

Or

$$\text{Collecting power} \propto \text{area}$$

## Charge-coupled devices (CCDs)

Most modern telescopes use CCDs as detectors. CCDs are sensors covering an array of semiconductors that are sensitive to light – the photosensitive portion of the CCD is backed onto a charge carrying medium. When a photon strikes a pixel a charge is released and a current is generated – this signal is used to build up a picture.



A CCD pixel produces a current

### Key Terms:

The **quantum efficiency** of a detector is a measure of how much incident light is captured and converted into a signal by a detector.

The quantum efficiency of a CCD can be almost 95 %, but is more typically around 80 %. For comparison, the quantum efficiency of the human retina is around 4–5 %.

### Example

The Kepler telescope has a collecting area of  $0.708 \text{ m}^2$  and uses CCDs with a quantum efficiency of 80 %. The human eye has a collecting area of  $1,200 \text{ mm}^2$  and has a quantum efficiency of 5 %.

- How many times more powerful would a CCD in the Kepler telescope be than the human eye if they had the same area?
- By what factor is the Kepler telescope more powerful than the human retina?

- Quantum efficiency is a direct measurement of the power of a detector.

$$\frac{80}{5} = 16$$

So CCDs are **16 × more powerful** over the same area.

- Collecting power  $\propto$  area

The area of the human eye is  $1200 \text{ mm}^2 = 1200 \times (10^{-3})^2 \text{ m} = 0.0012 \text{ m}^2$

$$\frac{0.708}{0.0012} = 590$$

So by area alone, the Kepler telescope would be **590 × more powerful** than the human eye.

However, the Kepler telescope not only has a larger collecting area than the human eye, it also has a higher quantum efficiency.

From (a), we are **16 × more powerful** than the human retina

$$16 \times 590 = 9440$$

So the Kepler telescope is **9440 × more powerful** than the human eye!

This means that the Kepler telescope can view objects that are **9440 × dimmer** than the human eye alone.

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## Questions

1. A series of radio telescopes over a large distance can gather data from a single dish. A single much larger radio telescope dish.

The Arcminute Microkelvin Imager (AMI) is one such telescope, comprising eight dishes of 12.8 m and a combined diameter of 110 m.

The AMI studies radio waves with frequencies of 1.4 GHz.

- a) Calculate the minimum angular resolution of the AMI.
- b) Calculate how many times more powerful the eight telescopes of the AMI are compared to if they worked individually.
2. A CCD array has an area of  $0.04 \text{ m}^2$  and a quantum efficiency of 75 %.
- The human retina has an area of  $0.001 \text{ m}^2$  and a quantum efficiency of 5 %.

Estimate how much more powerful the CCD array is compared to the human retina.

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## 9.2 Classification of stars

### Chapter 9.2 checklist

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

#### 9.2.1

- Understand and use concepts of absolute and apparent magnitude.....
- Understand and explain the stellar parallax scale, including how it was compiled.....
- Know the magnitude of the dimmest objects in the sky.....
- Use the relation between brightness and apparent magnitude.....
- Understand that brightness is a subjective scale of measurement.....

#### 9.2.2

- Understand and use light years.....
- Understand how a parsec is defined and use parsec as a unit.....
- Understand absolute magnitude.....
- Understand the relation between absolute and apparent magnitude and the distance.....

#### 9.2.3

- Understand and use Stefan's law to compare power output, temperatures and radii.....
- Understand and use Wein's displacement law to estimate black-body temperatures.....
- Recognise and sketch the general shape of black-body curves.....
- Know that stars are black bodies.....
- Use the inverse square law as it applies to black-body radiation.....
- Know the assumptions made when applying the inverse square law.....

#### 9.2.4

- Describe the main stellar spectral classes.....
- Understand how the temperature of stars is related to absorption spectra.....
- Understand the hydrogen Balmer absorption lines.....

#### 9.2.5

- Describe, sketch and interpret the shape of the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram.....
- Place stars of different classes on the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram.....
- Identify the position of the Sun on the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram.....
- Know the scales and ranges of the axes of the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram.....
- Describe and explain the path of main sequence stars on the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram.....

#### 9.2.6

- Understand that supernovae are defined by a rapid increase in absolute magnitude.....
- Explain how type 1a supernovae are used as standard candles to determine distances.....
- Describe the controversy concerning the acceleration of the universe and dark energy.....
- Understand the composition of neutron stars, including their high densities.....
- Define a black hole as an object for which the escape velocity is greater than the speed of light.....
- Describe the formation of neutron stars and black holes from supergiant stars.....
- Understand the origin of gamma ray bursts.....
- Describe supermassive black holes at the centre of galaxies.....
- Understand what is meant by the event horizon of a black hole.....
- Calculate the Schwarzschild radius of a black hole.....

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## 9.2.1 Classification by luminosity

The most obvious way to categorise stars and other astronomical bodies is by how bright they are. The Sun is obviously the brightest star at any time, and the Moon, when full, is the brightest object in the sky. However, **brightness is subjective** (it varies depending on how far away an object is from the observer). The Sun is in the sky because the Earth is much closer to the Sun than any other star.

### Apparent magnitude

#### Key Terms:

**Luminosity** is the total power output of a star.

**Intensity** is a subjective measure of brightness – the power per unit area. It is expressed using the **Hipparcos scale**. This is a logarithmic scale named after Hipparcos, an astronomer in the second century BCE from Nicea, in modern-day Turkey. The Hipparcos scale catalogues stars according to their **apparent magnitude**.

Observed brightness follows an inverse square law – as the light from a source spreads out, the brightness decreases.

$$b = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2}$$

$b$  = observed brightness  
 $L$  = luminosity (in W)  
 $r$  = distance from source

The unit of brightness is  $\text{W m}^{-2}$ .

The observed brightness and apparent magnitude of a star are related by

$$m = -2.51 \log_{10} b$$

The observed brightness and apparent magnitude of two stars are related by

$$m_2 - m_1 = -2.51 \log_{10} \frac{b_2}{b_1}$$

A change in magnitude of 1 corresponds to a change in brightness by a factor of 2.51. A change in magnitude of 1 appears  $2.51 \times$  brighter. A star with an apparent magnitude of 0 corresponds to brighter stars. The Sun has an apparent magnitude of around -26.5, which is the brightest object in the sky. The faintest star the eye can see has an apparent magnitude of 6.

#### Example

- a) The luminosity of the Sun is  $3.85 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ . Calculate the apparent magnitude of the Sun from Pluto, which has an average orbital radius of  $5.91 \times 10^9 \text{ km}$ .
- b) The apparent magnitude of the Sun as seen from Earth is -26.5. Calculate the apparent magnitude of the Sun as seen from Pluto.
- a) First find the brightness:
- $$b = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2} = \frac{3.85 \times 10^{26}}{4\pi (5.91 \times 10^{12})^2}$$
- $$b = 0.877 \text{ W m}^{-2}$$
- We then use the brightness to find the apparent magnitude.
- $$m = -2.51 \log_{10} b$$
- $$m = 0.143$$
- b) A change in apparent magnitude of 1 corresponds to a factor of brightness of 2.51.
- $$m_{\text{Sun}} - m_{\text{Sirius}} = 0$$
- $$m_{\text{Sun}} - m_{\text{Sirius}} = 1$$
- $$\frac{b_{\text{Sun}}}{b_{\text{Sirius}}} = 1.60 \times 2.51$$
- The Sun is  $4.02 \times$  as bright as Sirius as seen from Pluto.

### Questions

- Explain the difference between luminosity, brightness and apparent magnitude of a star.
- The Sun has a luminosity of  $3.85 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ . Calculate the apparent magnitude of the Sun as seen from the Earth,  $1.50 \times 10^{11} \text{ m}$ .
- Star A has an apparent magnitude of 5.7, as seen from Earth. Star B has an apparent magnitude of -2.3. Compare the brightness of the two stars.

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## 9.2.2 Absolute magnitude, $M$

Apparent magnitude only gives us how bright a star appears from Earth. Two objects of the same luminosity will have different apparent magnitudes depending on how far away they are.

So, how do scientists tell how far away an object is?

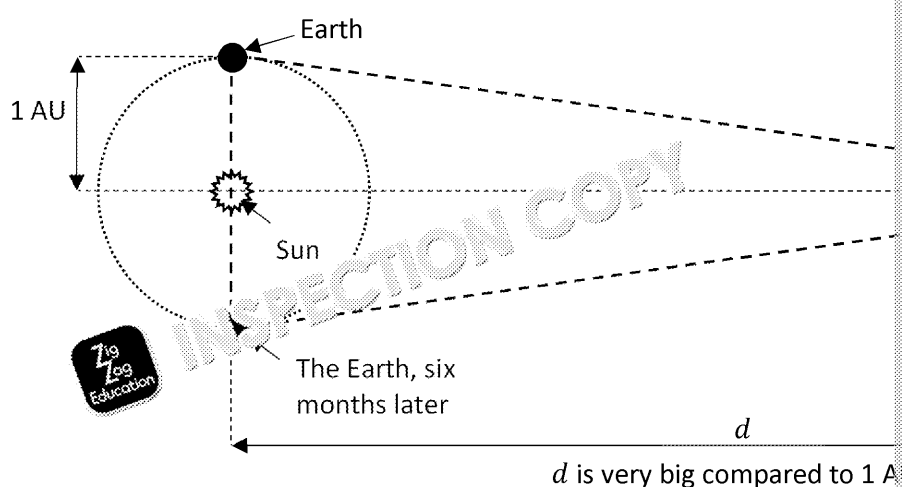
### Parallax

Think about an analogue scale, such as a meter. The needle lies in front of the scale, so the angle at which you view it changes where it appears to be on the scale. If you look at the reading directly straight on from the scale, you will get one reading, whereas if you move to the left or right you will read something different.

This effect is called **parallax**. Parallax is a source of error you should be aware of in experiments, but it's actually very important for astronomy! The same is true for stars, but with much greater distances involved!

#### Key Terms:

**Parallax** is the phenomenon of an object's apparent position changing depending on the observer's point of view.  
**1 AU** or **astronomical unit** is the average distance between the Sun and Earth.



The diagram above shows the Earth orbiting the Sun. As the Earth changes position, the apparent position of a star is seen to change with respect to more distant stars.

We can use trigonometry to determine the distance to the star based on the angle of parallax measured over a period of six months.

$$\tan \theta = \frac{1 \text{ AU}}{d}$$

$$d = \frac{1 \text{ AU}}{\tan \theta}$$

The angles used are very small, so we can use the small-angle approximation for  $\tan$

$$\tan \theta \approx \theta$$

If we use  $d$  in parsecs and  $\theta$  in arcseconds we can write

$$d = \frac{1}{\theta}$$

There are other methods of determining the distances to stars, but using parallax is the earliest method used by astronomers.

1 arcmin

1 arcsec

or  $\frac{1}{3600}$  of a degree

1 arcsec

$4.9 \times 10^{16}$  m

A parsec

to a star

A light year

astrophysics

light travels

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## Absolute magnitude

**Absolute magnitude** is the magnitude a star would appear if viewed from 10 pc away.

We know that brightness scales with distance, and we know that it's possible to find the distance to a star. We can use this information to find the **absolute magnitude** of a star.

Absolute magnitude can be expressed in terms of apparent magnitude:

### Exam tip

Remember that light year are distance, not time. Science fiction get this wrong. These units just in a galaxy far



$$m - M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$$

$m$   
 $M$   
 $d$

### Example

The apparent magnitude of Melnick 34 is 13.10. The distance to Melnick 34 is 160 kly.

Calculate the absolute magnitude of Melnick 34.

Use  $m - M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$

Rearrange for  $M$

$$M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10} - m$$

$$d = 160 \text{ kly} = 160 \times 10^3 \div 3.26 = 49.08 \text{ kpc}$$

$$M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{49.08 \times 10^3}{10} - 13.10$$

$$M = 5.35$$



## Questions

- Describe the origin of these units:
  - Light year
  - Parsec
- A star subtends 0.0037 arcminutes in the sky over the course of six months. Calculate the distance to the star.
- A star has an apparent magnitude of -1.8 and an absolute magnitude of -14.5. Calculate the distance to the star.



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## 9.2.3 Classification by temperature, black-body radiation

### Black-body curves and Wien's displacement law

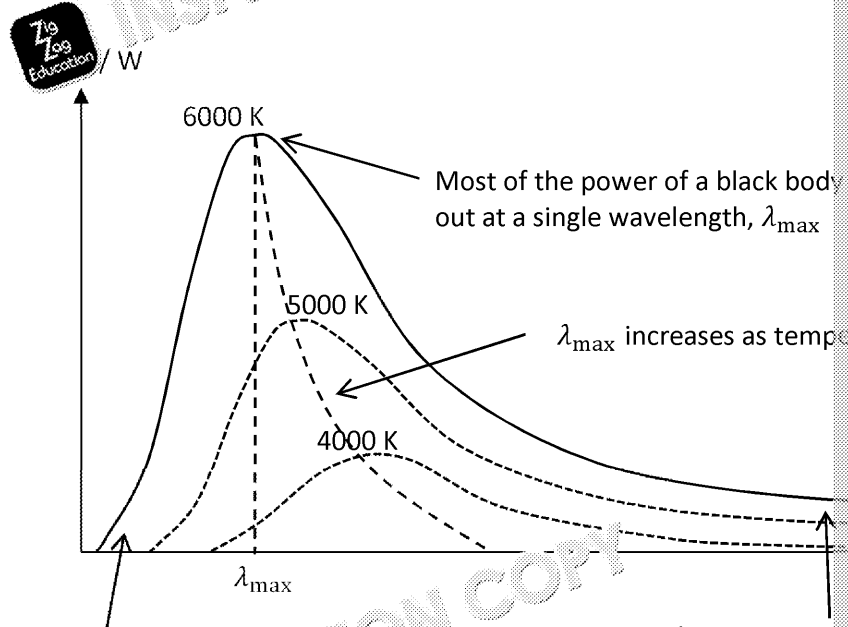
#### Key Terms:

A **black body** is an object that perfectly absorbs and emits radiation of all wavelengths.

The graph of the radiation emitted by a black body has a characteristic shape.

The wavelength at which the most power is radiated depends on the temperature.

You can see the graph of radiation emitted by a black body below.



Photons with short wavelengths have a lot of energy but there are many of them, so the total power of radiation emitted as short wavelengths is low.

There are more photons with long wavelengths but each has less energy, so the total power of radiation emitted as long wavelengths is low.

**Wien's law** lets astrophysicists estimate the black-body temperature of a source.



$$\lambda_{\max} T = \text{constant} = 2.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m K}$$

### Star power

**Stefan's law** gives the power output of a star based on the star's temperature and surface area.



$$P = \sigma A T^4$$

$P$  = power (in Watts)  
 $\sigma$  = Stefan constant  
 $A$  = surface area  
 $T$  = temperature (in Kelvin)

All stars are assumed to be black bodies.

The intensity of light from a star decreases over distance via the inverse square law.



$$I = \frac{P}{4\pi r^2} \propto \frac{1}{r^2}$$

This is why more distant stars can appear dimmer, despite emitting more power.

The inverse square law works on the assumption that the power **only** dissipates via something absorbing or reflecting the light, the amount of power will decrease.

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**Example**

The radius of the Sun is  $6.96 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$ , and its luminosity is  $3.85 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ . Calculate the peak wavelength emitted by the Sun.

First use Stefan's law to find the temperature of the Sun.

$$P = \sigma AT^4$$

Rearrange this to find  $T$

$$T = \left( \frac{P}{\sigma A} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

To find  $A$ , the surface area of the Sun, we use  $A = 4\pi r^2$ .

$$T = \left( \frac{P}{\sigma 4\pi r^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

$$T = \left( \frac{3.85 \times 10^{26}}{5.67 \times 10^{-8} \times 4\pi \times (6.96 \times 10^8)^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

$$T = 5779 \text{ K}$$

We then use this in Wien's law to find the peak wavelength.

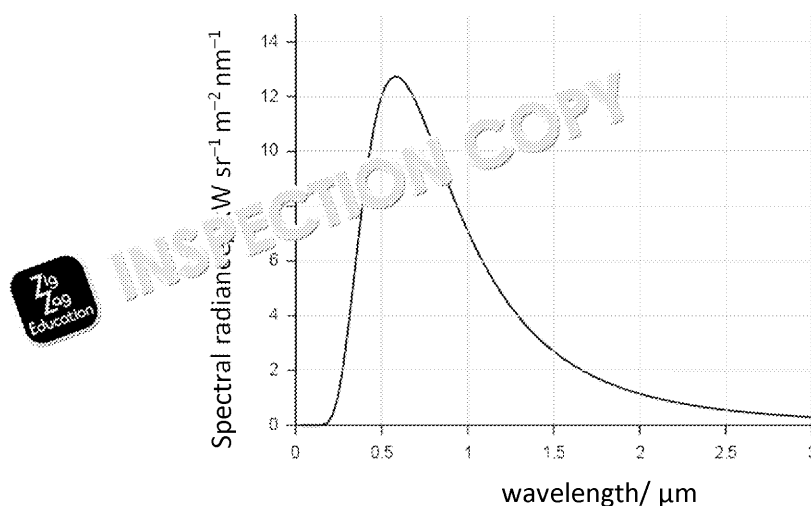
$$\lambda_{\text{max}} T = 2.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m K}$$

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{T} = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{5779}$$

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} = 5.02 \times 10^{-7} \text{ m} = 502 \text{ nm}$$

**Questions**

- The surface temperature of the Sun is 5,800 K.  
Estimate the peak wavelength of the Sun.
- A star has a surface temperature of 7,800 K and a total power output of  $6.8 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$ .  
Calculate the surface area of the star.
- The star that produces the black-body curve seen below has a radius of  $645 \times 10^6 \text{ m}$ .  
Estimate the total power output of the star.



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## 9.2.4 Principles of the use of stellar spectral classes

Stars are split into different spectral classes depending on their temperature, peak colour (the colour the star appears to be) and the prominent absorption lines.

Spectral class	Intrinsic colour	Temperature/ K	Prominent absorption lines
O	Blue	25,000–50,000	Ionised Helium
B	Blue	11,000–25,000	Ionised Helium
A	Blue-white	7,500–11,000	Ionised Helium
F	White	6,000–7,500	Ionised Helium
G	Yellow – white	5,000–6,000	Ionised Helium
K	Orange	3,500–5,000	Neutral Helium
M	Red	< 3,500	Neutral Helium



### Exam tip

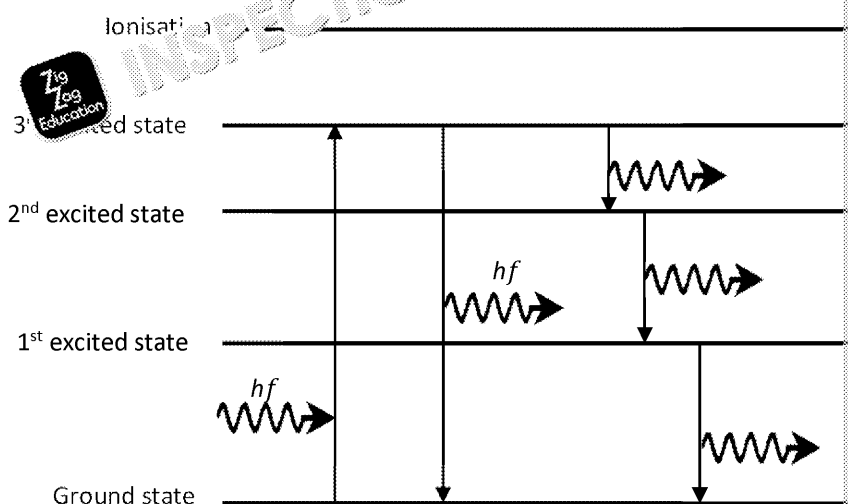
Learn this table!

A good starting point is to learn the general trend: temperature decreases down it and the colours move from blue to red wavelengths.

A mnemonic for learning the spectral classes is:  
**Only Bad Astronomers Forget Generally Known Names**

## Absorption lines

Light is generated in the heart of stars by nuclear fusion. As the photons pass through the outer layers of the star, they are continually absorbed and re-emitted by the atoms and ions in the outer layers.



The wavelengths of light corresponding to the energy levels of these absorptions are the spectra of these stars.

In stars with low temperature, most atoms are in the lowest energy state. These temperatures increase and distinct absorption spectra are produced.

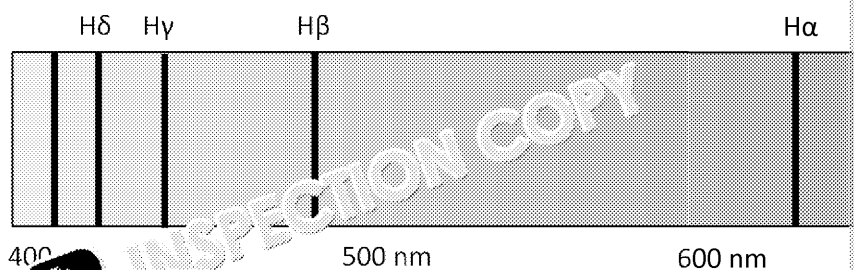


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The **hydrogen Balmer series** corresponds to the wavelengths absorbed by excited  $n = 2$  state.

The hydrogen Balmer absorption lines can be seen below.



Absorption spectra are unique to each element. The absorption spectra of a star tell us about the composition of the star, giving clues to the age of a star and its origins.

Many H atoms in A and B class stars already have electrons in the  $n = 2$  excitation state. When a photon of light is absorbed and re-emitted, the photon is absorbed and re-emits visible photons. These are called Balmer lines.

## Questions

- Complete the table below with information about the main stellar spectral classes.

Spectral class	Intrinsic colour	Temperature/ K	Pro
O	Blue	25,000–50,000	
B			
	White	6,000–7,500	
			Ionise
	Orange		
M		< 3,500	

- Describe the origin of the hydrogen Balmer absorption lines and what absorption lines tell us about stars.

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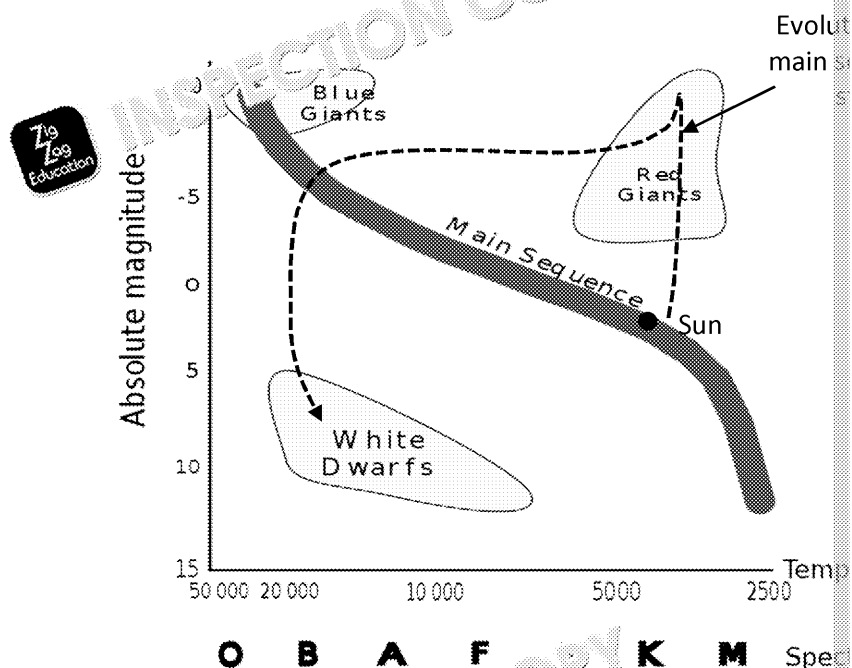




## 9.2.5 The Hertzsprung–Russell (HR) diagram

### Key Terms:

The Hertzsprung–Russell (HR) diagram shows different types of stars plotted by absolute magnitude and temperature (or spectral class).



### Stellar classes

The Hertzsprung–Russell diagram is split into four distinct areas.

**Main sequence** stars run diagonally across the HR diagram.

All stars have a main sequence stage of their life cycle – this is when stars fuse hydrogen. Most stars are in the main sequence, including the Sun – its position is marked on the diagram.

As main sequence stars use up their hydrogen, they move onto other areas of the diagram based on their mass.

**Giants** are large bright stars.

- **Red giants** are relatively cool giants. Helium fuses in the core of red giants.
- **Blue giants** are incredibly large and incredibly hot. The cores of blue giants are made of heavier elements (up to iron) from nuclear fusion.
- **White dwarfs** are the cores of stars which have stopped undergoing fusion. When a star runs out of fuel, it ejects its outer layers, leaving behind an incredibly hot core. White dwarfs cool down over time and become **black dwarfs**.

### The axes

- The x-axis of the diagram is **temperature**. This is a **logarithmic** scale and increases from right to left. The temperature axis ranges from 50,000 K to 2,500 K (or O to M if using spectral class).
- The y-axis of the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram can also be spectral class. The y-axis is **absolute magnitude**. The absolute magnitude axis ranges from +15 to -10.

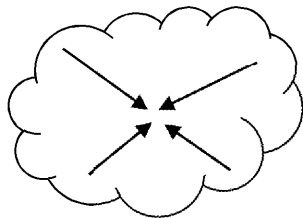
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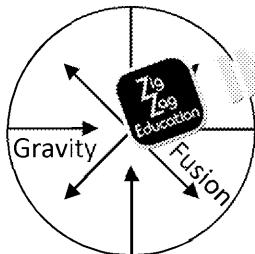


## Stellar evolution

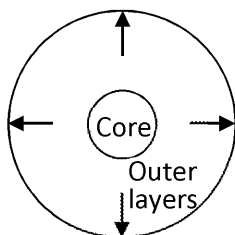
The path of a star such as the Sun can be seen on the diagram above.



Stars form when interstellar gas and dust clouds collect under incredibly high gravitational pressures – eventually the pressure is high enough to **begin nuclear fusion**.



During the star's **main sequence**, hydrogen fuses into helium. The increased radiation pressure caused by the energy from fusion balances the inward gravitational forces, so the star is stable. For most stars this stage lasts for billions of years.



Eventually the hydrogen in the star's core is used up. The core contracts and heats up, fusing helium into heavier elements, called a **helium flash**, and it gets much hotter. At this point it will leave the main sequence and become a giant. The outer surface will cool.



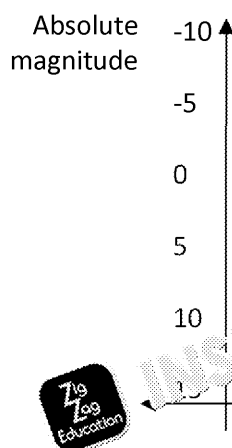
Eventually, all the fuel in the star is used up by fusion. During this stage, no fusion occurs. The white dwarf loses the increased heat, and the core is exposed.

As the outer layers of the star are lost, they are blown away by the intense heat and pressure.

Eventually even the heat of the core dissipates and the star becomes a black dwarf.

## Questions

1. Sketch the Hertzsprung–Russell diagram below, including filling in values for temperature and spectral class.



2. On your Hertzsprung–Russell diagram above, mark the position of the Sun.
3. Describe the life cycle of a star such as our Sun, including its formation and evolution.

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## 9.2.6 Supernovae, neutron stars and black holes

While stars that are the mass of our Sun become red giants and then white dwarfs, fusion runs out, higher-mass stars may end their lives in more dramatic fashion.

### Supernovae

Supernovae are categorised by a rapid and enormous increase in the absolute magnitude. Supernovae can have absolute magnitudes tens of thousands of times that of the Sun!

When a star with a mass eight or more times that of the Sun runs out of fuel, energy is no longer sufficient to balance out the inward pull of the star.

The star collapses and the increased gravitational forces become high enough to create a black hole or a neutron star.

The falling outer layers bounce off the core and explode outwards at incredibly high speeds. The shock wave from supernovae can be strong enough to begin fusion in nearby stars.



#### Exam tip

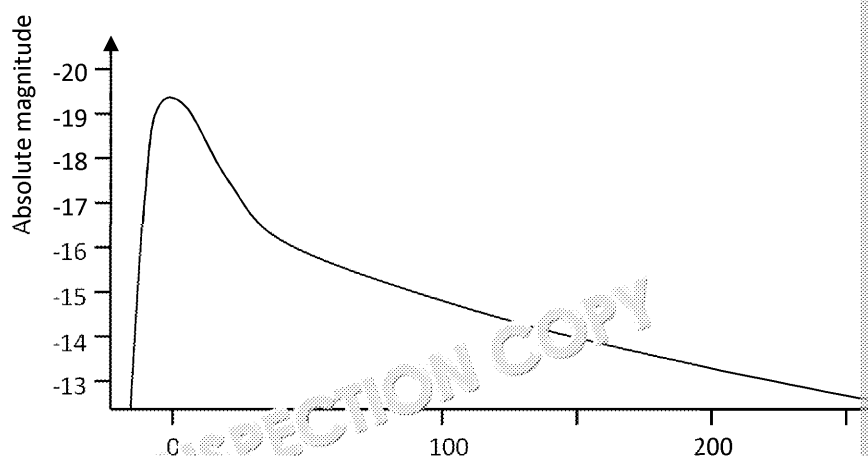
All elements heavier than iron were formed in supernovae. A nearby supernova would have either injected high-mass elements into the Sun formed in, or even led directly to the formation of our solar system.

In binary systems, type Ia (type one-a) supernovae form by stealing or **accreting** mass from a companion star. When the star gathers enough mass (1.4 times the mass of the Sun), it collapses and explodes as a type Ia supernova.

#### Key Term

**Accretion** is the process of a star attracting the mass from a nearby object due to its gravity.

Type Ia supernovae always form at the same critical mass. Because of this, all type Ia supernovae have similar light curves, as seen below.



The absolute magnitude of a type Ia supernova increases rapidly to around -19.3 and then decreases slowly over several hundred days.



#### Exam tip

At  $t = 0$  on the light curve, the absolute magnitude of a type Ia supernova is at its maximum.

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## Standard candles

### Key Terms:

A **standard candle** is a star which has a known luminosity and which can be used to determine the distance to other stars.

Because all type Ia supernovae have the same absolute magnitude and light curve, we can use their apparent magnitude, and hence how far away they are.

Astrophysicists then use these known distances to calibrate for other techniques.

**Cepheid variables** are another type of standard candle. These stars cycle in brightness, and the period of the cycle is directly related to the maximum luminosity of the Cepheid variable.

Knowing the luminosity of a star and its apparent magnitude lets astronomers determine its distance.

### Example

A type Ia supernova is observed with a peak apparent magnitude of +16.

Calculate the distance to the supernova.

We use  $m - M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$

We know that the peak absolute magnitude,  $M$ , of a type Ia supernova is -19.3.

Rearrange for  $d$

$$\log_{10} \frac{d}{10} = \frac{m - M}{5}$$

$$\frac{d}{10} = 10^{\frac{m - M}{5}}$$

$$d = 10 \times 10^{\frac{m - M}{5}}$$

We have  $m = 16$ ,  $M = -19.3$

$$d = 10 \times 10^{\frac{16 - (-19.3)}{5}}$$

$$d = 10^{7.06} \text{ pc} = 115 \text{ Mpc}$$

After standard candles were discovered in 1908 by Henrietta Swan Leavitt, catalogues of distances to stars were compiled. Similar star catalogues are maintained to this day, and they have produced some shocking results.

While the Big Bang theory suggests that the universe is expanding, it was presumed to be expanding at a constant or slowing rate. The study of type Ia supernovae as standard candles actually suggests that the universe may in fact be accelerating.

There must be some driving force behind any such acceleration, which astrophysicists call dark energy.

### Key Terms:

**Dark energy** is the term given to the unknown driving force behind the observed acceleration of the universe. The nature and origin of dark energy is unknown, and is an ongoing subject of research.

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## Neutron stars

While a supernova ejects a star's outer layers into space, the star's core will be left behind. If the core is more than 1.4 times or more that of the Sun, the incredibly dense core left over is called a neutron star.

### Key Terms:

A **neutron star** is an object where the gravitational pressure has become so high that electrons and protons fuse, becoming neutrons. A neutron star is composed almost entirely of neutrons.

A neutron star has a core of neutrons surrounded by an outer crust of high neutrons and protons.

Neutron stars are incredibly dense. Their diameter is on the order of magnitude between 10 and 20 km, but their mass is between 1.4 and 3 solar masses.

### Example

Estimate the density of a neutron star.

A neutron star has a diameter of  $\sim 10$  km, or a volume of

$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3 \approx \frac{4}{3}\pi (5 \times 10^3)^3 = 5.24 \times 10^{11} \text{ m}^3$$

The lower mass of a neutron star is 1.4 solar masses.

$$m_n \approx 1.4 \times m_s = 2.79 \times 10^{30} \text{ kg}$$

So the density of a neutron star is

$$\rho = \frac{m_n}{V} \approx \frac{2.79 \times 10^{30}}{5.24 \times 10^{11}} = 5.3 \times 10^{18} \text{ kg m}^{-3}$$

This is about the density of an atomic nucleus!

## Black holes

When a supernova is so large that the remaining core is over approximately three solar masses, a black hole is formed.

### Key Terms:

A **black hole** is an object that has such a high gravity that nothing can escape it – not even light.

The escape velocity for a black hole is  $v_{esc} > c$ . This means that an object would have to be travelling faster than the speed of light – something which is impossible! This means that nothing can ever escape a black hole. The distance from the centre of a black hole from which nothing can escape a black hole is the **event horizon** (where  $v_{esc} = c$ ).

### Key Terms:

The **Schwarzschild radius**,  $R_s$ , of a black hole is the radius of its event horizon.

Escape velocity is given by  $v_{esc} = \sqrt{\frac{2GM}{R}}$

At the event horizon,  $v_{esc} = c$  and  $R = R_s$  so

$$c^2 = \frac{2GM}{R_s} \text{ and}$$

$$\text{Schwarzschild radius, } R_s \approx \frac{2GM}{c^2}$$

$G$  = gravitational constant  
 $M$  = mass of black hole  
 $c$  = speed of light in vacuum

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## Supermassive black holes

At the centre of our galaxy, stars have been observed orbiting incredibly quickly in the presence of a highly massive object at the centre of the galaxy. Astrophysicists believe there is a **supermassive black hole**.

### Key Terms:

**Supermassive black holes** at the centre of galaxies have masses millions of times that of the Sun.

There are three proposed methods by which supermassive black holes could form:

- Enormous clouds of gas coalesce before the galaxy first forms
- A black hole formed by a star that accretes mass from surrounding stars
- Numerous black holes form in a cluster and eventually merge into a single, more massive black hole

## Gamma ray bursts

Astrophysicists will occasionally detect enormous amounts of energy for milliseconds up to several minutes or even hours at a time. These flashes of high-energy light are known as **gamma ray bursts**.

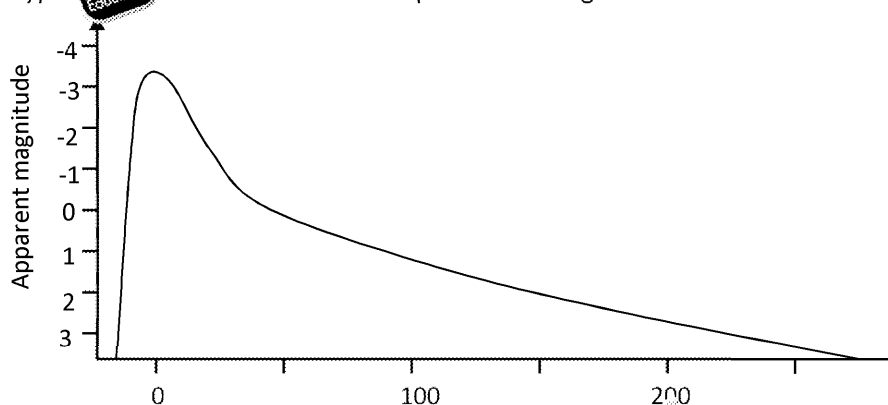
Gamma ray bursts are thought to originate from collapsing supergiant stars forming neutron stars and black holes. As matter falls inwards, it heats up and ejects gamma rays in high-energy beams.

Gamma ray bursts can have energies of around  $10^{44}$  J, making them some of the most energetic electromagnetic events ever recorded. A single gamma ray burst lasting seconds could have the equivalent energy of the total amount of energy the Sun will ever release over billions of years.

If a gamma ray burst was directed at Earth from a nearby star, it could destroy the majority of life on Earth. This may have been the cause of historical extinctions of dinosaurs.

## Questions

1. Describe the appearance and formation of a supernova.
2. A type 1a supernova is observed to produce the light curve seen below.



- a) Why can type 1a supernovae be used to determine distances?
  - b) Calculate the distance to the supernova in light years.
  - c) Cosmological distances calculated using type 1a supernovae have resulted in a value for the size of the universe that is smaller than that calculated using other methods. Explain this discrepancy.
3. a) Describe the formation of a neutron star, including its formation.
  - b) A neutron star has a mass of 1.5 solar masses. If the density of a neutron star is the same as the density of an atomic nucleus ( $\sim 2.3 \times 10^{17} \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ ), estimate the radius of the neutron star.
  4. a) How is the event horizon of a black hole defined?
  - b) Estimate the Schwarzschild radius of the Sun in metres, if its mass was converted into a black hole.

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## 9.3 Cosmology

### Chapter 9.3 checklist

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

#### 9.3.1

- Understand the origin of the Doppler effect .....
- Calculate shifts in wavelength and frequency due to Doppler shift for optical .....
- Apply the Doppler effect to the movement of binary stars, galaxies and quasars .....

#### 9.3.2

- Understand red shift .....
- Calculate the distance to stars from their red shifts .....
- Interpret red shift as resulting from the expansion of the universe .....
- Use the red shift of distant stars to estimate the age of the universe .....
- Describe the Big Bang theory, including evidence .....

#### 9.3.1

- Describe quasars .....
- Describe the discovery of quasars .....
- Estimate distances to quasars from red shifts and power outputs .....
- Understand how quasars are formed .....

#### 9.3.2

- Describe the difficulties of detecting exoplanets correctly .....
- Understand how the radial velocity method and the transit method are used .....
- Recognise and sketch the typical light curves associated with the detection of .....

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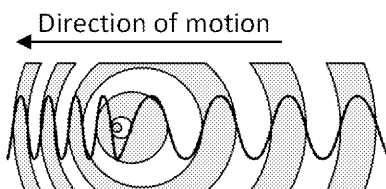


## 9.3.1 Doppler effect

When a police or ambulance siren is approaching you, the frequency of the siren increases. When the siren is moving away from you, the frequency decreases again. This is the **Doppler effect**.

### Key Terms:

The **Doppler effect** is the phenomenon of wave lengths increasing or decreasing depending on the velocity of the source compared to the observer.



For a moving wavesource, wavefronts are pushed together in the direction of motion, and spread out behind.

Starlight also undergoes the Doppler effect – light from stars moving away from us has longer wavelengths. The light is said to be **red shifted**.

Light from sources approaching us – such as stars in our own galaxy – has compressed wavelengths. The light is said to be **blue-shifted**.

For light sources moving with a velocity much smaller than the speed of light,  $v \ll c$  ( $v < 0.1 c$ )



The red shift of light is given by



$$\frac{\Delta f}{f} = -\frac{\Delta \lambda}{\lambda} = \frac{v}{c}$$



$$\text{Red shift, } z = -\frac{v}{c}$$

$f$   
 $\Delta f$   
 $\lambda$   
 $\Delta \lambda$   
 $v$   
 $c$   
 $z$

$\Delta f$  = observed frequency – original frequency

$\Delta \lambda$  = observed wavelength – original wavelength

Red shift is measured from known spectral absorption lines. The hydrogen Balmer series is a common pattern of absorption; if this pattern is seen at a longer wavelength to the one expected, it has been red shifted.



### Exam tip

A recessional velocity (an object moving away from us) is taken to be negative. This means that an object moving away from us will have a positive red shift.

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## Binary stars

The radius of binary stars that orbit each other in the plane of observation (i.e. they eclipse each other as seen from Earth) can be determined from the changing red shift of the stars.

### Key Terms:

A **binary star system** consists of two stars orbiting each other around a common centre of mass.

Two stars orbit a common centre of mass



One star moves behind the other, becoming eclipsed

When a star is moving towards Earth, its observed spectral pattern becomes blue shifted. When moving away from Earth, its observed spectral pattern is red shifted.

The difference in time between peaks of red shift give the period of the orbiting stars. From the difference in red shift and blue shift we can find the velocity of the stars with respect to each other. From this we can find the distance between the stars.

### Example

A binary system is observed.

The spectroscopic data shows that the orbital period of the system is 50 days.

The  $H_{\alpha}$  absorption line (6256.8 nm) is observed to be a double line with periodicity. One line is at a minimum of 6256.6 nm while the other is at a maximum of 6257.1 nm.

Calculate the distance between the stars.

First we find the period of the system in seconds

$$\text{Period, } T = 50 \times 24 \times 60 \times 60 = 4.32 \times 10^6 \text{ s}$$

Then the velocity of the star at the maximum absorption line (Star 1) is given by:

$$\frac{v_1}{c} = -\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda}$$

$$v_1 = -c \frac{\Delta\lambda_1}{\lambda} = -3.00 \times 10^8 \times \frac{6256.6 - 6256.8}{6256.8}$$

$$v_1 = 9.193 \times 10^3 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

The orbital radius of Star 1 is then given by

$$R_1 = \frac{\text{circumference of orbit}}{2\pi} = \frac{v_1 T}{2\pi}$$

$$R_1 = \frac{9.193 \times 10^3 \times 4.32 \times 10^6}{2\pi} = 6.238 \times 10^{10} \text{ m}$$

We can do the same for the second star as well:

$$\frac{v_2}{c} = -\frac{\Delta\lambda_2}{\lambda}$$

$$v_2 = -c \frac{\Delta\lambda_2}{\lambda} = -3.00 \times 10^8 \times \frac{6257.1 - 6256.8}{6256.8}$$

$$v_2 = -13.789 \times 10^3 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

And the orbital radius of the second star is: *don't actually need the sign of the velocity here as the star is moving away from Earth – it's been red shifted*

$$R_2 = \frac{v_2 T}{2\pi} = \frac{13.789 \times 10^3 \times 4.32 \times 10^6}{2\pi} = 9.481 \times 10^9 \text{ m}$$

Adding these for the total distance gives us

$$6.238 \times 10^{10} + 9.481 \times 10^9 = 7.186 \times 10^{10} \text{ m} = 0.479 \text{ AU}$$

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## Quasars

For most galaxies, individual stars can't be made out. Instead, the light of whole galaxies is used.

Quasars form when matter falls into the supermassive black holes at the centre of galaxies. The matter heats up as it falls and emits huge amounts of energy in two beams – these beams make up the light of a quasar.

Quasars are some of the furthest observable objects in the universe, due to their high brightness, and so show a very high red shift.

Because quasars are so far away from Earth, their velocity compared to Earth is too small for  $z = \frac{v}{c}$  to give an accurate estimate of their speed. Quasars can travel at speeds up to  $0.2c$  and so **relativistic effects** must be accounted for.

## Questions

- The wavelength of light emitted by excited atomic hydrogen is 21 cm.

Light from a star shows this line at 19 cm.

- Has the light from the star been red shifted or blue-shifted? What does this tell you about the star?
- Calculate the velocity of the star relative to Earth.
- Calculate the red shift of the star.

- An absorption line for mercury is 184.95 nm.

A binary star system is observed to have two mercury absorption lines, one at 184.95 nm and one at 185.05 nm.

The period of the system is 84 days.

Calculate the distance between the two stars in the binary system.

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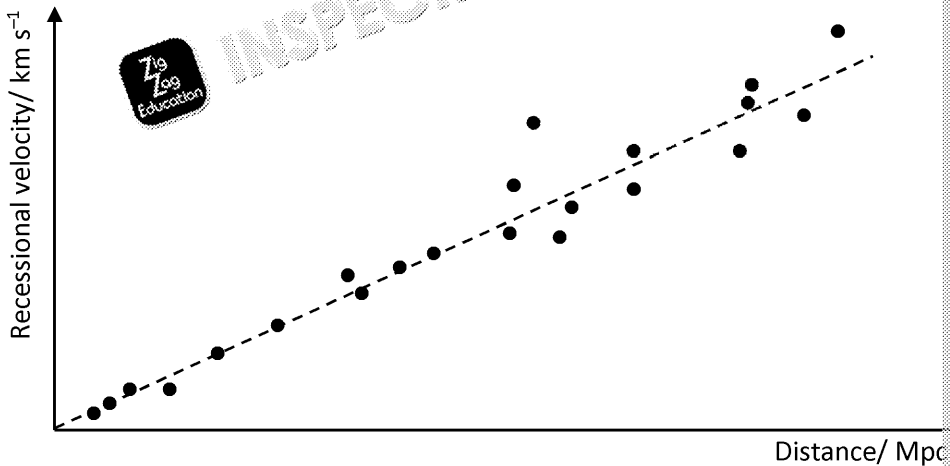
## 9.3.2 Hubble's law

### Key Terms:

The **Big Bang theory** describes the beginning of the universe as the expansion from a single infinitely dense and hot point.

This expansion is still occurring today and accounts for the larger red shift of galaxies further away.

Plotting the recessional velocities against the distance of galaxies, a trend emerges.



The rate at which galaxies recess from Earth is proportional to their distance from Earth. This is called Hubble's law, named after the scientist who discovered it, Edwin Hubble.

$$v = Hd$$

The Hubble constant is the gradient of the graph of recessional velocity against distance.

Hubble's law implies that the space in between galaxies itself is expanding – the further away they are, the faster they move away from each other.

A consequence of this is that in the past the galaxies were once much closer together. The universe may have even been in a single infinitely hot and dense point of space containing all the matter and energy in the universe.

This single infinitely dense point expanded outwards in a single enormous expansion.

### Exam tip

For Hubble's law, we take recessional velocities (objects moving away from us) to be positive. The opposite is for objects moving towards us. This is because Hubble's law only applies to recessional galaxies.



### Example

A galaxy is observed to have a red shift of  $z = 0.100$ . Calculate the distance to this galaxy.

First we find the velocity of the galaxy from the red shift:  
 $z = \frac{v}{c} \rightarrow v = zc = 0.100 \times 3.00 \times 10^8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$   
 $= 3.00 \times 10^7 \text{ m s}^{-1}$   
 Remember to always put the velocities in with Hubble's constant!

Then use Hubble's law:  
 $v = Hd \rightarrow d = \frac{v}{H} = \frac{3.00 \times 10^7}{65} = 462 \text{ Mpc}$

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## The age and size of the universe

Hubble's law allows us to estimate the size and age of the observable universe.

A galaxy moving at speed  $v$  can move a distance  $d$  in a time  $t$ , so that

$$t = d/v$$

From Hubble's law,

$$v = Hd \text{ or } H = \frac{v}{d} = \frac{1}{t}$$

so that

$$t \text{ (age of the universe)} = \frac{1}{H}$$

Using the value for  $H$  above

$$H = 65 \text{ km s}^{-1} \text{ Mpc}^{-1} \text{ which we'll need to convert into seconds}^{-1}$$

(by converting  $\text{Mpc}^{-1}$  to  $\text{m}^{-1}$ ):

$$H = \frac{65 \times 1000}{3.08 \times 10^{22}} = 2.110 \times 10^{-18} \text{ s}^{-1}$$

$$\text{So } t \text{ (age of universe)} = \frac{1}{H} = \frac{1}{2.110 \times 10^{-18}} = 4.738 \times 10^{17} \text{ s} = \mathbf{15.0 \text{ billion years}}$$

With the limit of  $v = c$ , light can only have travelled a limited distance – the radius

$$d \text{ (radius of observable universe)} = ct = 3.00 \times 10^8 \times 4.738 \times 10^{17}$$

$$d \text{ (radius of observable universe)} = 1.422 \times 10^{26} \text{ m} = \mathbf{14.2 \text{ Gpc}}$$

But this is only half the size of the observable universe, so we have to double this diameter of the observable universe = **28.4 Gpc**.

## Evidence of the Big Bang

As well as Hubble's law, there is plenty of other evidence for the Big Bang theory.

1. **The cosmic microwave background (CMB)** radiation is a type of radiation that has been present since the Big Bang. The CMB is very low energy, corresponding to a temperature of only a few kelvin, and is uniform across the universe. While the Big Bang would have been enormously energetic, the CMB is the remnant of that energy after it has been spread out over the course of the age of the universe across vast distances.

The static on an old television set is the TV picking up the CMB – a visual representation of the universe!

2. The abundance of elements in the universe is also evidence for the Big Bang. The universe is made up of about 75% hydrogen and 25% helium, with 2% other elements. This abundance agrees very closely with models of the universe shortly after the Big Bang.

Hydrogen and helium were produced when the temperature of the universe was high, about three minutes after the Big Bang, in a ratio of roughly 3:1, while other elements were produced later in stars.

## Questions

1. Outline the main pieces of evidence for the Big Bang.
2. A galaxy has a red shift of 0.081. Calculate the distance to this galaxy from Earth.
3. Use Hubble's constant to estimate an age for the universe.

### Example

These questions are designed to test your understanding of the concepts of the Big Bang. If the universe is expanding, then the further away an object is, the faster it is moving away from us. This means that objects further away will reach a higher speed than objects closer to us.

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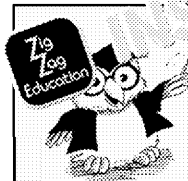


### 9.3.3 Quasars

Quasars are incredibly bright and incredibly distant radio sources.

As matter falls into the supermassive black holes at the centre of a galaxy, it reaches high temperatures and emits super-fast jets of particles. These particles emit electromagnetic radiation, which decelerates as it travels through space, which we can detect on Earth. A quasar is the centre of a galaxy that produces such radiation.

Quasars are some of the most distant objects observable from Earth, and as a result have red shifts  $z$  around  $z = 7$ .



#### Exam tip

Some quasars have red shifts that correspond to speeds close to the speed of light! They're not actually moving faster than the speed of light, which is impossible, but moving faster than  $c$  with respect to us after taking into account the expansion of the space between us and them.

#### Example

One of the first quasars ever observed, 3C 48, has a red shift of 0.367.

- Estimate the distance to 3C 48.
- The apparent magnitude of 3C 48 is 16.2. Estimate the power output of 3C 48.

- To find distance from red shift we can use

$$z = \frac{v}{c} \text{ and then } v = Hd$$

$$v = zc = 0.367 \times 3.00 \times 10^8 = 1.101 \times 10^8 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

$$d = \frac{v}{H} = \frac{1.101 \times 10^8}{2.110 \times 10^{-18}} = 5.22 \times 10^{25} \text{ m} = 1.69 \text{ Gpc}$$

- We can find the absolute magnitude of 3C 48 from

$$m - M = 5 \log \frac{d}{10}$$

$$M = m - 5 \log \frac{d}{10} = 16.2 - 5 \log \frac{1.69 \times 10^9}{10} = -24.9$$

We can then find brightness from

$$M = -2.5 \log b \rightarrow b = 10^{-M/2.5} = 10^{24.9/2.5} = 10^{9.96} \text{ W m}^{-2}$$

Absolute magnitude is measured at 10 Pc ( $3.08 \times 10^{17}$ ), so

$$L = b \times 4\pi r^2 = 10^{9.96} \times 4 \times \pi \times (3.08 \times 10^{17})^2 \approx 1.09 \times 10^{46} \text{ W}, \sim 10^{12} \text{ times the power of the Sun}$$

#### Questions

- Describe the formation and appearance of quasars.
- 3C 295 is a quasar with a red shift of 0.464.
  - Estimate the distance from Earth to 3C 295.
  - The apparent magnitude of 3C 295 is 19.8. Calculate the absolute magnitude of 3C 295.

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## 9.3.4 Detection of exoplanets

### Key Terms:

Exoplanets are planets outside of our solar system, orbiting other stars.

One of the most exciting recent developments in astrophysics is the detection of exoplanets.

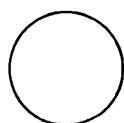
It's only recently that measurements of exoplanets have become detailed enough to determine their composition. As exoplanets are so much brighter than the stars they orbit, most exoplanets can't be directly detected, and are determined via different methods.



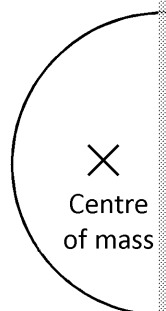
### Variation in Doppler shift

As planets orbit a star, the star is in fact also orbiting the planet; they have a common centre of mass.

This centre of mass lies within the star as a star will have much higher mass than a planet. For instance, the Sun contains 99.9 % of all the mass in our solar system.



Planet



Centre of mass

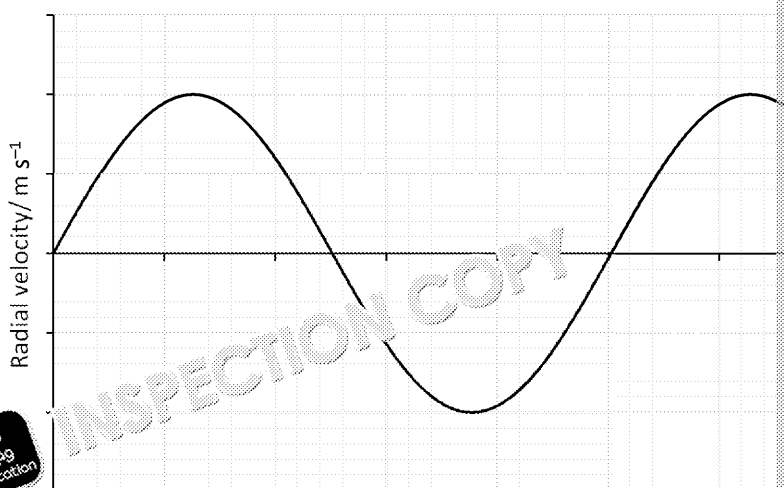
Star

While a star will not orbit with the same radius as the planet, it will still appear to wobble as it moves around the common centre of mass.



While we cannot observe this wobble directly, it corresponds to a change in velocity as the star moves towards and forwards – this change in velocity is apparent in the red shift of the star as detected in binary systems.

This produces a curve like the one seen below.



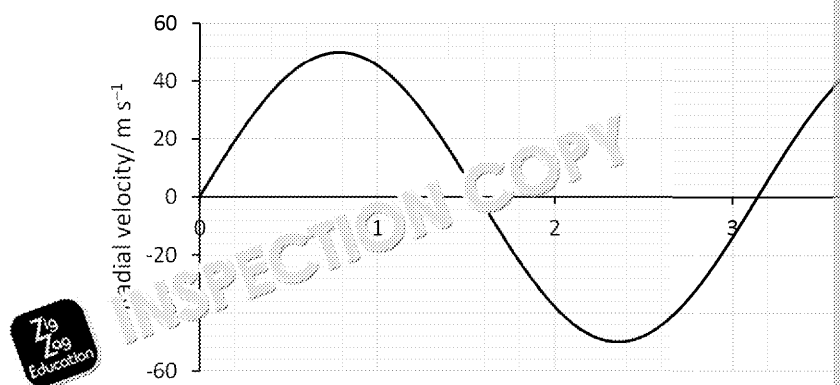
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## Example

The graph below shows the radial velocity of a star over time.



- What is the period of the star's 'wobble'?
- Calculate the radius of the star's 'wobble'.

a) The period of the star's 'wobble' is the time taken for a single oscillation. The period of the star's 'wobble' is, therefore, around 3.1 years =  $9.78 \times 10^7$  s

- b) Angular velocity can be given in terms of both radial velocity and radius, and  $\omega = \frac{2\pi}{T}$  and  $\omega = \frac{v}{R}$

The radial velocity is the peak of the curve,  $50 \text{ m s}^{-1}$

Both of these equations are equivalent

$$\omega = \frac{2\pi}{T} = \frac{v}{R}$$

Rearranging for  $R$

$$R = \frac{vT}{2\pi} = \frac{50 \times 9.78 \times 10^7}{2\pi} = 7.8 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$$

## Transit method

Planets do not give off light of their own, only reflect light from their stars. This means that when a planet passes in front of a star, some of the light is reflected back.

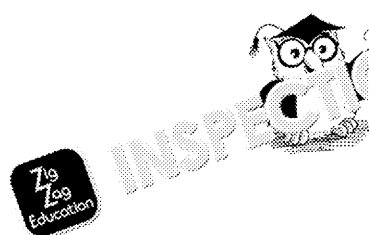
This decrease is very small – for a planet the size of Jupiter the decrease in brightness is only about 1 part in 10,000.

The decrease in brightness as a planet passes in front of a star can be found from the ratio of the areas of the planet and the star.

$$\text{Decrease in brightness} = \left( \frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}} \right)^2$$

$$\frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}}$$

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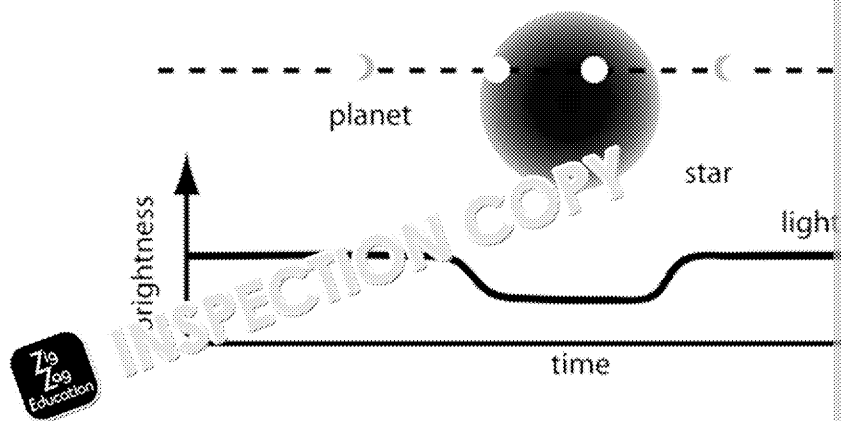


**Tip**

The radius of a star can be found using Stefan's law!

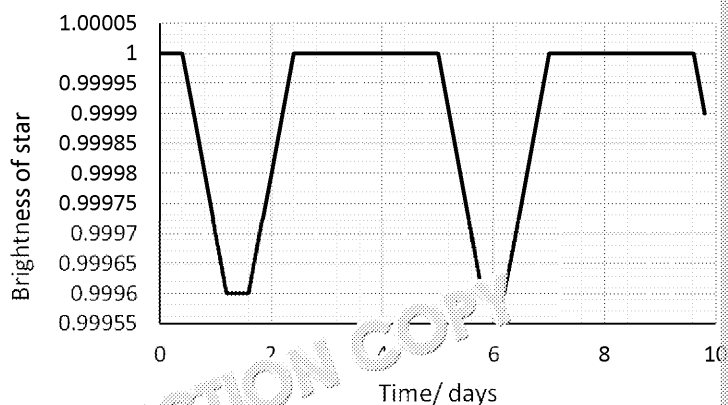


As a planet passes in front of a star, the light curve below is seen.



### Example

The brightness curve for a star can be seen below.



- a) What is the orbital period of the exoplanet?  
 b) Calculate the radius of the exoplanet as a fraction of the radius of the star.

- a) The orbital period of the exoplanet is the time taken for the star to reach the same position between the start of each dip in brightness:

$$T = 5 - 0.4 = 4.6 \text{ days}$$

The star would have to have a very high mass for this to be possible – typical stars would only be seen once in this time period.

- b) Decrease in brightness =  $\left(\frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}}\right)^2$

$$\sqrt{\text{Decrease in brightness}} = \frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}}$$

$$\text{Decrease in brightness} = 1 - 0.9996 = 0.0004$$

$$\frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}} = \sqrt{0.0004} = 0.02$$

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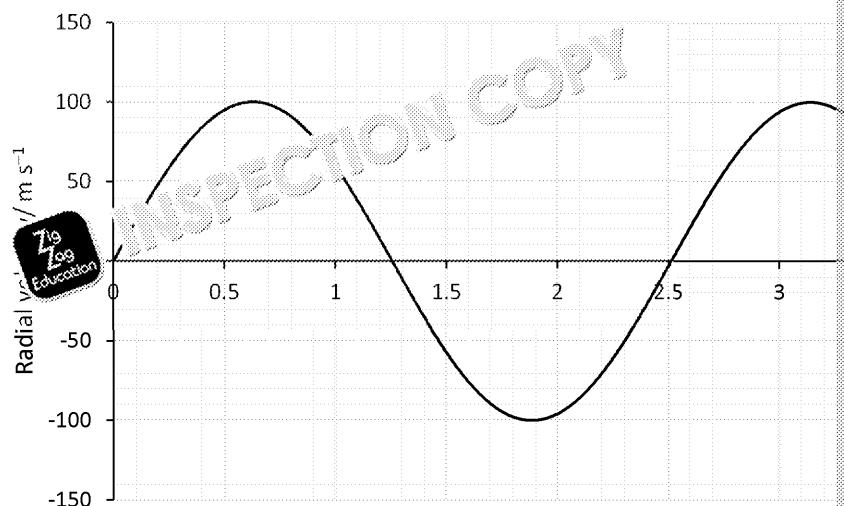
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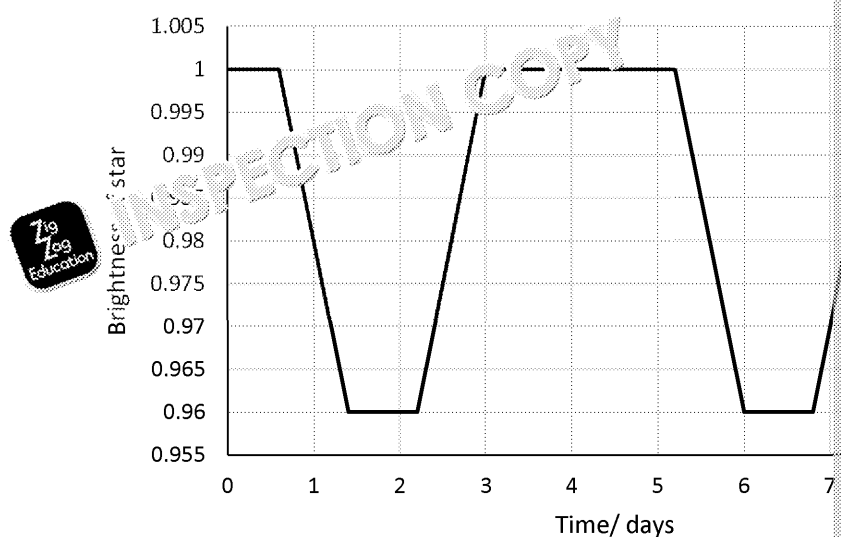


## Questions

- Why is it so difficult to detect exoplanets directly?
- A star is observed to 'wobble' slightly, producing the curve seen below.



- Describe why this curve implies the presence of an exoplanet around the star.
  - Estimate the radius of the star's 'wobble'.
- The light curve of a star is seen below.



- How does the presence of an exoplanet around the star cause the shape of the light curve?
- What is the radius of the exoplanet as a fraction of the radius of the star?

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## Exam-style questions

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1. The Hubble space telescope is positioned in low Earth orbit and has a diameter of 2.4 m. The Hubble space telescope can be used to study infrared, optical and ultraviolet light.

1.1 Explain the advantages of positioning the Hubble space telescope in low Earth orbit.

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1.2 Describe the mechanism by which telescopes collect images of ultraviolet light.

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1.3 Show that the minimum angular resolution of the Hubble space telescope is  $2.23 \times 10^{-7}$  rad for wavelengths of 535 nm.

1.4 The proposed replacement for the Hubble space telescope is the James Webb space telescope, which has a mirror of diameter 6.5 m.

Compare the collecting powers of the Hubble space telescope to the James Webb space telescope.

State any assumptions you have made.

Assumption.....

1.5 The minimum angular resolution of the human eye is  $2.91 \times 10^{-4}$  rad.

If a refracting telescope had an eyepiece with a focal length of 15 cm, what diameter of objective lens would be required to view an object the same size as the object viewed by the Hubble space telescope?



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2. Kepler's Supernova was a supernova observed in 1604.

Kepler's Supernova had an apparent magnitude of -2.25 and was 20,000 light years away.

2.1 Describe how a supernova is formed.

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2.2 Show that the absolute magnitude of Kepler's Supernova was -16.7.

2.3 Calculate the luminosity of Kepler's Supernova.

2.4 Kepler's Supernova may have been a type 1a supernova.

Describe how type 1a supernovae can be used as standard candles.

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3. Sirius A is a main sequence star in a binary system with another star, S. The luminosity of Sirius A is  $9.72 \times 10^{27} \text{ W}$ .

3.1 Describe how binary stars can be identified from their absorption

.....

.....

.....

3.2 The radius of Sirius A is 1.71 times the radius of the Sun.

Show that the peak wavelength emitted by Sirius A is  $2.93 \times 10^{-7} \text{ m}$ .

3.3 Sketch the black body spectrum of Sirius A.



3.4 Sirius A's binary twin, Sirius B, is a white dwarf.

Explain how a main sequence star, such as Sirius A, becomes a white dwarf.

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4. A quasar, 3C 48, shows the 21.0 cm Hydrogen line at 28.7cm.

4.1 Describe how a quasar is formed.

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4.2 Ignoring relativistic effects, calculate the distance to quasar 3C 48



4.3 The red shift of some quasars is greater than 1

Explain why this goes against conventionally agreed physics and

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4.4 Describe how quasars provide evidence for the Big Bang theory.

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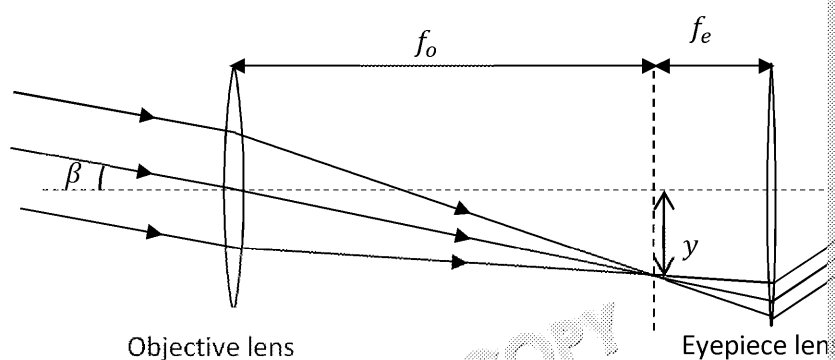
# Answers

## 9.1.1 Astronomical telescopes consisting of two converging lenses

- Refracting telescopes use **converging lenses** so that parallel beams of light can be focused to form a real image.
- The focal length of the eyepiece should be **smaller** than the focal length of the objective lens (so that the image will be enlarged).
  - $$M = \frac{f_o}{f_e}$$

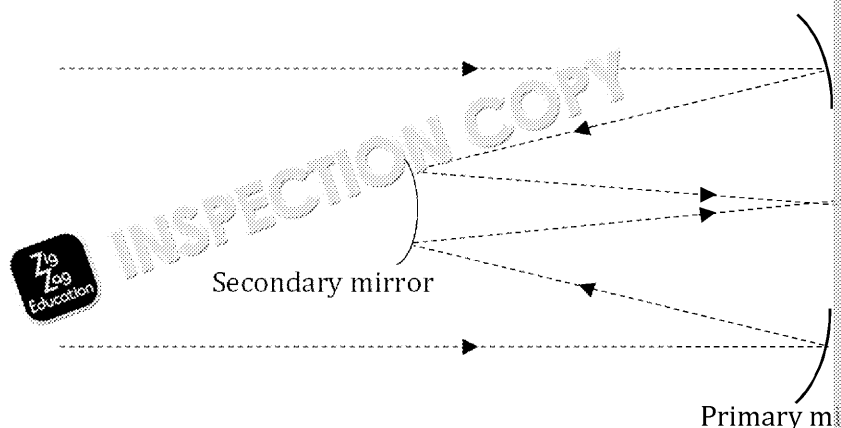
$$f_e = \frac{f_o}{M} = \frac{1.80}{1.80} = 1.00 \text{ m}$$
  - $$M = \frac{\alpha}{\beta}$$

$$\alpha = M\beta = 1.80 \times 8.00 = 14.4^\circ$$
- 



## 9.1.2 Reflecting telescopes

- Refracting telescopes must be made incredibly long for desired magnification, so reflecting telescopes are more compact. It is much more difficult to create high-quality lenses than it is to make high-quality mirrors. Reflecting telescopes are much heavier and much more difficult to move than refracting telescopes. Mirrors are much easier to support than lenses, reducing distortion. Reflecting telescopes do not suffer from chromatic aberration, and spherical aberration is much easier to correct than chromatic aberration.
- Chromatic aberrations are caused by different wavelengths of light being diffracted differently, resulting in a blurred image. Spherical aberrations occur when light rays passing through the edges of the lens do not focus at the same point as the rays passing through the centre. The shape of the lens must be changed to correct this.
- 



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### 9.1.3 Single-dish radio telescopes and IR, UV and X-ray telescopes

- Building telescopes at high altitudes **reduces the effects of light refracting** in the atmosphere and refractive effects due to **turbulence**.
- UV telescopes detect light via solid-state devices – a photon of sufficiently high frequency can knock an electron out of its shell and the energy is used to emit an electron, creating a current.
- The Lovell telescope is a **radio telescope**.  
It is **ground-based** as only radio and visible light can penetrate the atmosphere.  
It is **outside urban areas** to reduce radio interference.  
It has a **large dish** to increase the resolving power of radio telescopes.
- Infrared telescopes are useful for studying **cool regions of space**, such as regions where new stars are forming.  
In space, infrared light is **absorbed by Earth's atmosphere**.  
Far from Earth to **shield against temperature changes**.  
Large diameters **increase resolving and collecting power**.

### 9.1.4 Advantages of large-diameter telescopes

- $$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}$$

$$\lambda = \frac{c}{f} = \frac{3 \times 10^8}{12 \times 10^9} = 0.025 \text{ m}$$

$$\theta \approx \frac{0.025}{110} = 2.27 \times 10^{-4} \text{ rad}$$
  - collecting power  $\propto \text{diameter}^2$   

$$\frac{\text{collecting power (total)}}{\text{collecting power (individual)}} \propto \frac{110^2}{12.8^2} = 73.9 \times \text{more powerful}$$
- By area:  

$$\frac{\text{Area (CCD)}}{\text{Area (retina)}} = \frac{0.04}{0.001} = 40 \times \text{more powerful}$$
  
By efficiency:  

$$\frac{\text{Efficiency (CCD)}}{\text{Efficiency (retina)}} = \frac{75}{5} = 15 \times \text{more powerful}$$
  
In total, the CCD array is **600 × more powerful** than the human retina

### 9.2.1 Classification by luminosity

- Luminosity is the power given off by a star.  
Brightness is the observed light from a star at a certain distance from the star.  
Intensity is an objective measure of brightness – the power per unit area at a certain distance.  
Apparent magnitude is a logarithmic scale of brightness.  
An increase in apparent magnitude of 1 relates to a dimming of 2.51 times in brightness.
- $$b = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2} = \frac{3.85 \times 10^{26}}{4\pi (1.50 \times 10^{11})^2} = 1362 \text{ W m}^{-2}$$

$$m = -2.5 \log_{10} b = -2.5 \log_{10} 1362 = -7.14$$
- $$m_B - m_A = -2.51 \log_{10} \frac{b_B}{b_A}$$

$$\frac{m_A - m_B}{2.51} = \log_{10} \frac{b_B}{b_A}$$

$$\frac{b_B}{b_A} = 10^{\frac{m_A - m_B}{2.51}} = 10^{\frac{5.7 + 2.3}{2.51}} = 1540$$
  
Star B is **1,540 times brighter** than star A.

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## 9.2.2 Absolute magnitude, $M$

- As the Earth orbits the Sun, stars appear to shift position due to the **parallax effect**. The distance to a star which subtends **1 arcsecond over the course of a year**. A light year is the distance **light in a vacuum** covers in **one year**.

- $d = \frac{1}{\theta}$  where  $d$  is in parsecs and  $\theta$  is in arcseconds.

$$1 \text{ arcminute} = 60 \text{ arcseconds}$$

$$0.0037 \text{ arcminutes} = 0.222 \text{ arcseconds}$$

$$d = \frac{1}{0.222} = 4.5 \text{ pc} (= 1.3 \times 10^{17} \text{ m})$$

- $m - M = 5 \log \frac{d}{10}$

$$d = 10 \times 10^{\frac{m-M}{5}} = 10 \times 10^{\frac{-1.8+14.5}{5}} = 3470 \text{ pc} (= 1.07 \times 10^{20} \text{ m})$$

## 9.2.3 Classification by temperature, black-body radiation

- $\lambda_{\text{max}} T = 2.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m K}$

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{T} = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{5800} = 500 \text{ nm}$$

- $P = \sigma AT^4$

$$A = \frac{P}{\sigma T^4} = \frac{6.81 \times 10^{27}}{5.67 \times 10^{-8} \times 7800^4} = 3.24 \times 10^{19} \text{ m}^2$$

- The peak wavelength of the star is around  $0.6 \mu\text{m}$

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} T = 2.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m K}$$

$$T = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{0.6 \times 10^{-6}} = 4833 \text{ K}$$

$$A = 4\pi \times \pi \times (645000 \times 10^3)^2 = 5.23 \times 10^{18} \text{ m}^2$$

$$P = \sigma AT^4 = 5.67 \times 10^{-8} \times 5.23 \times 10^{18} \times 4833^4 = 1.62 \times 10^{26} \text{ W}$$

## 9.2.4 Principles of the use of stellar spectral classes

- 

Spectral class	Intrinsic colour	Temperature/ K	Prominent absorption lines
O	Blue	25,000–50,000	He <sup>+</sup> , H
B	Blue	11,000–25,000	He
A	Blue – white	7,500–11,000	H (strong), Ionised He
F	White	6,000–7,500	Ionised He
G	Yellow – white	5,000–6,000	Ionised and neutral He
K	Orange	3,500–5,000	Neutral He
M	Red	< 3,500	Neutral He

- Hydrogen Balmer lines come from the wavelengths absorbed by electrons in hydrogen. Absorption lines give information on the composition of stars.

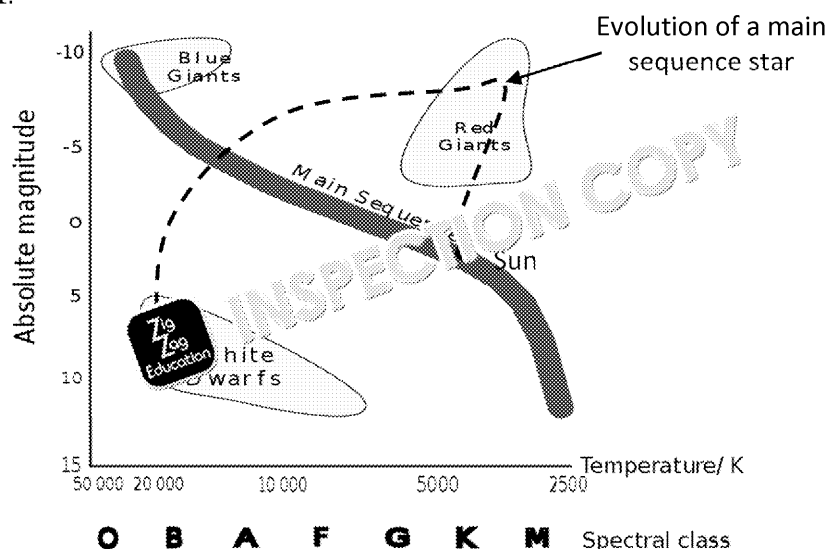
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## 9.2.5 The Hertzsprung–Russell (HR) diagram

1.



2. Marked S above.

3. Formation – interstellar gas and dust coalesce until gravitational pressure is enough to start fusion. Those required for fusion.
- Main sequence – hydrogen fuses into helium. Fusion energy balanced by gravity.
- Red giant – hydrogen used up in core, hydrogen in outer layers fuses. Outer layers expand and higher luminosity.
- White dwarf – fuel runs out, fusion stops and only residual heat left. Loses outer layers.

## 9.2.6 Supernovae, neutron stars and black holes

1. A supernova is the incredibly bright death of a massive star. When large stars run out of fuel, gravity overcomes energy from fusion and the star collapses. The core becomes so hot and dense that there is a sudden burst of fusion, resulting in a huge explosion.

2. a) All type 1a supernovae reach the **same maximum absolute magnitude** (-19.3). From the **relation between absolute and apparent magnitude** the distance can be calculated.

- b) Maximum **apparent magnitude** is around -3.4 (from graph)  
Maximum **absolute magnitude** for type 1a supernovae is -19.3

$$m - M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$$

$$d = 10 \times 10^{\frac{m-M}{5}} = 10 \times 10^{\frac{-3.4+19.3}{5}} = 15.1 \text{ kpc}$$

- c) Furthest type 1a supernovae seem to have accelerating recessions. This implies the universe is accelerating. This requires a driving force – 'dark energy'.

3. a) After large supernovae eject most of their mass, they leave behind a dense core. Between 1.4 and 3 solar masses, electrons and protons are forced together to form neutrons, largely comprised of neutrons.

- b)  $m_N = 1.5 \times m_S = 1.5 \times 1.99 \times 10^{30} = 2.985 \times 10^{30} \text{ kg}$

$$\rho_N = \frac{m_N}{V_N} = \frac{m_N}{\frac{4}{3}\pi r^3}$$

$$r = \sqrt[3]{\frac{2.985 \times 10^{30}}{\frac{4}{3}\pi \times 2.3 \times 10^{17}}} = 14.6 \times 10^3 \text{ m}$$

4. a) The event horizon of a black hole is the point from which nothing can escape.

- b)  $R_S \approx \frac{2GM}{c^2} = \frac{2 \times 6.67 \times 10^{-11} \times 2.985 \times 10^{30}}{(3 \times 10^8)^2} = 2.95 \times 10^3 \text{ m}$

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### 9.3.1 Doppler effect

1. a) The light has been blue-shifted (the wavelength is shorter). This means that the star is moving towards Earth.

b)  $-\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} = \frac{v}{c}$

$$v = -\frac{\Delta\lambda c}{\lambda} = -\frac{-2 \times 10^{-2} \times 3.00 \times 10^8}{21 \times 10^{-2}} = 2.86 \times 10^7 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

c)  $z = -\frac{v}{c} = -\frac{2.86 \times 10^7}{3.00 \times 10^8} = -0.095$

2. Period  $T = 2\pi \times 60 = 7.26 \times 10^6 \text{ s}$

$$\frac{v}{c} = -\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda}$$

$$v_1 = -c \frac{\Delta\lambda_1}{\lambda} = -3 \times 10^8 \times \frac{184.9496 - 184.9499}{184.9499} = 487 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

$$v_2 = -c \frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} = -3 \times 10^8 \times \frac{184.9500 - 184.9499}{184.9499} = -162 \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

$$R_1 = \frac{v_1 T}{2\pi} = \frac{487 \times 7.26 \times 10^6}{2\pi} = 5.63 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$$

$$R_2 = \frac{v_2 T}{2\pi} = \frac{162 \times 7.26 \times 10^6}{2\pi} = 1.87 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$$

$$R_{\text{Total}} = R_1 + R_2 = (5.63 + 1.87) \times 10^8 = 7.50 \times 10^8 \text{ m}$$

### 9.3.2 Hubble's law

1. **Increasing red shift of stars at further distances** implies an **expansion of space** to be assumed to be from a single point in space in the early universe which all matter is moving away from.

The **cosmic microwave background** is a low level radiation that permeates the universe. It is the **remaining energy** from the enormous explosion in the Big Bang.

The **abundance of elements** in the universe (73 % hydrogen, 25 % helium, 2 % other elements) is **expected from a short, high-energy period** of matter.

2.  $v = Hd$

$$z = \frac{v}{c}$$

$$v = zc$$

$$d = \frac{v}{H} = \frac{zc}{H} = \frac{0.081 \times 3.00 \times 10^5}{65} = 374 \text{ Mpc}$$

3.  $H = \frac{v}{d}$  and  $v = \frac{d}{t}$  so  $H = \frac{1}{t}$

$$t_{\text{Universe}} = \frac{1}{H} = \frac{1}{65 \times 10^3 \div (3.08 \times 10^{22})} = 4.74 \times 10^{17} \text{ s} = 1.50 \times 10^{10} \text{ years}$$

### 9.3.3 Quasars

1. Quasars are **extremely bright radio sources** and **very distant observable** objects. Quasars are formed as matter falls into black holes, heating up and emitting gamma rays.

2. a)  $z = -\frac{v}{c}$

$$v = -zc$$

$$v = -zc$$

$$d = \frac{v}{H} = \frac{0.464 \times 3.00 \times 10^5}{65} = 2140 \text{ Mpc}$$

- b)  $m - M = 5 \log \frac{d}{10}$

$$M = m - 5 \log \frac{d}{10} = 19.8 - 5 \log \frac{2140 \times 10^6}{10} = -21.85$$

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### 9.3.4 Detection of exoplanets

1. Stars are significantly brighter than any planet, and so any light given off / reflected by the light from the parent star.
2.
  - a) As an exoplanet orbits its parent star, both the star and planet **orbit a common star**. This causes the star to move backwards and forwards, resulting in a **Doppler shift** used to measure the velocity of the star.
  - b) Period,  $T = 2.5 \text{ years} = 7.88 \times 10^7 \text{ s}$   
 Linear velocity,  $v = 100 \text{ m s}^{-1}$   

$$\omega = \frac{v}{r} = \frac{2\pi}{T}$$

$$R = \frac{100 \times 7.88 \times 10^7}{2\pi} = 1.25 \times 10^9 \text{ m}$$
3.
  - a) As the exoplanet **passes in front of the star**, light from the star is **blocked**, reducing the light observed from the star.
  - b) Decrease in brightness  $= \left(\frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}}\right)^2$   

$$\sqrt{\text{Decrease in brightness}} = \frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}}$$
 Decrease in brightness = 0.04 (4 %)  

$$\frac{r_{\text{planet}}}{r_{\text{star}}} = \sqrt{0.04} = 0.2$$
 i.e. the planet is one-fifth the radius of the star, twice as large as Jupiter, assuming the star is the Sun.

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## Exam-style questions

Q1.1	(Positioning a telescope in space) removes refractive effects OR turbulence from atmosphere (for optical wavelengths) ✓ Allows ultraviolet and infrared wavelengths to be seen as these are absorbed by Earth's atmosphere ✓
Q1.2	Detector absorbs a photon ✓ Electron uses energy of photon to overcome binding energy and creates a current ✓
Q1.3	$\theta \approx \frac{\lambda}{D}$ ✓ $\theta \approx \frac{535 \times 10^{-9}}{2.4}$ ✓ ( $6.6 \times 10^{-5}$ rad)
Q1.4	collecting power $\propto (\text{diameter})^2$ $\frac{\text{collecting power (Hubble)}}{\text{collecting power (James Webb)}} = \frac{(\text{diameter(Hubble)})^2}{(\text{diameter(James Webb)})^2}$ $\frac{\text{collecting power (Hubble)}}{\text{collecting power (James Webb)}} = \frac{2.4^2}{6.5^2}$ ✓ $\frac{\text{collecting power (Hubble)}}{\text{collecting power (James Webb)}} = 0.136$ ✓ <b>Assumption:</b> quantum efficiencies of (CCDs in) James Webb and Hubble telescopes are the same ✓
Q1.5	Magnification required, $M = \frac{2.91 \times 10^{-4}}{2.23 \times 10^{-7}}$ $M = 1305$ ✓ $M = \frac{f_o}{f_e}$ $f_o = M f_e$ $f_o = 1305 \times 15 \times 10^{-2}$ $f_o = 195.7$ ✓ Total length = $f_e + f_o$ Total length = $15 \times 10^{-2} + 195.7$ Total length = 196 m ✓

Q2.1	Star runs out of (hydrogen) fuel for fusion ✓ Inward gravitational forces overcome outward forces from fusion ✓ Inward rushing matter 'bounces' back from core ✓
Q2.2	$m - M = 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$ $M = m - 5 \log_{10} \frac{d}{10}$ ✓ $M = -2.25 - 5 \log_{10} \frac{20000 \times 3.26}{10}$ ✓ ( $M = -16.2$ )

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**Q2.3**  $m = -2.51 \log_{10} b$

$$b = 10^{-\frac{m}{2.51}}$$

$$b = 10^{\frac{16.2}{2.51}} \checkmark$$

$$b = 10^{6.45} \text{ W m}^{-2} (= 2.85 \times 10^6 \text{ W m}^{-2}) \checkmark$$

$$b = \frac{L}{4\pi r^2}$$

$$L = b \times 4\pi r^2$$

(Absolute magnitude measure in pc)

$$L = 10^{6.45} \times 4\pi \times (10 \times 3.08 \times 10^{16})^2 \checkmark$$

$$L = 10^{42} \text{ W} \checkmark$$

**Q2.4** All type Ia supernovae reach a specific absolute magnitude (-19.3) ✓  
so that their distances can be easily determined and compared to other stars ✓

**Q3.1** (As binary stars orbit each other) they move at different velocities ✓  
so absorption lines appear with two different red shifts ✓

**Q3.2**  $P = \sigma AT^4$

$$T = \left( \frac{P}{\sigma 4\pi r^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}} \checkmark$$

$$T = \left( \frac{9.72 \times 10^{27}}{5.67 \times 10^{-8} \times 4\pi \times (1.71 \times 6.96 \times 10^8)^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{4}}$$

$$T = 9906 \text{ K} \checkmark$$

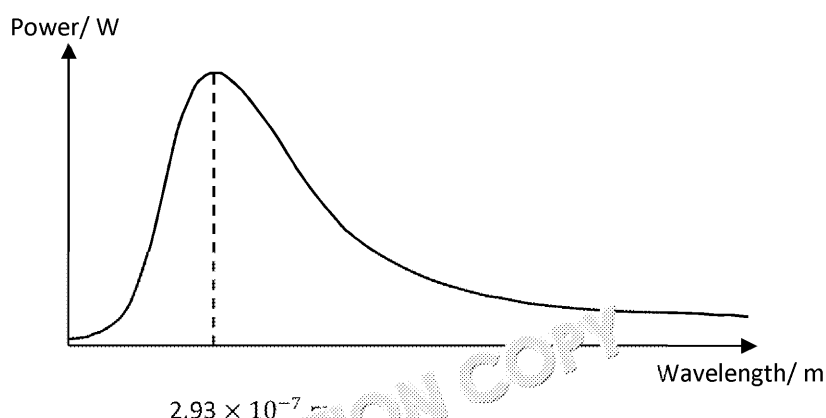
$$\lambda_{\text{max}} T = 2.9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m K}$$

$$\lambda_{\text{max}} = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{T} \checkmark$$

$$\lambda = \frac{2.9 \times 10^{-3}}{9906} \checkmark$$

$$(\lambda = 2.93 \times 10^{-7} \text{ m})$$

**Q3.3** Correct shape ✓  
Peak wavelength at  $2.93 \times 10^{-7} \text{ m}$  ✓



**Q3.4** (Main sequence star runs out of hydrogen in core and collapses ✓  
Increased pressure causes helium to fuse and the star expands (into red giant) ✓  
Eventually fuel for fusion runs out in outer layers and only hot core (white dwarf) ✓)

<b>Q4.1</b>	Matter falls into black hole ✓ Matter interacts as it falls and emits radiation ✓	
<b>Q4.2</b>	$-\frac{\Delta\lambda}{\lambda} = \frac{v}{c}$ $v = -\frac{\Delta\lambda c}{\lambda}$ $v = -\frac{(13.3-21) \times 10^{-2} \times 3.00 \times 10^8}{21 \times 10^{-2}} \checkmark$ $v = -1.10 \times 10^8 \text{ m s}^{-1} \checkmark$ $v = Hd$ $d = \frac{v}{H}$ $d = \frac{1.10 \times 10^8}{70} \text{ Mpc} \checkmark$	
<b>Q4.3</b>	A red shift of $z > 1$ corresponds to a velocity $v > c$ (which is impossible) ✓ This is possible as it is the expansion of space that makes it appear as if $v > c$ ✓	
<b>Q4.4</b>	Quasars are some of the furthest observable objects with the highest red shift ✓ Implying the expansion of space from the Big Bang ✓	Do qu fur or red cos the the



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