

Universe Sampler Chair:

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Introduction.

The *Universe Sampler* observing program is a unique observing program designed specifically for the beginning observer. It is designed to expose the beginner to a sample of the many different types of objects that the Universe has to offer for our observing enjoyment. It is designed to help the new observer learn his or her way around the sky and to teach some of the basics of astronomy. It offers an alternate naked-eye list of deep sky objects for those who are interested in astronomy but shy away because they do not have a telescope or binoculars.

The *Universe Sampler* will take you on an exciting journey through the heavens. You will meet many of the brightest stars, learn their names and the constellations in which they are found. You will visit our moon and some of the planets that share our solar system. You will greet at least one of the comets that leave the outer reaches of the solar system to visit the neighborhood of the sun. You will become acquainted with double stars, variable stars, star clusters, nebulae and galaxies.

One you have completed the *Universe Sampler* observing program, you should be well acquainted with the night sky and be able to find your way among the stars with no problem. You should be in a position to know what type of objects interest you most and be ready to continue your observing with one or more of the Astronomical League's other observing programs, e.g., the Messier List, the Double Star Program, the Lunar Programs, etc.

The titles of the lessons are:

- Basic Sky Movement
- How to Find North in the Sky
- Star Charts and Constellation Patterns
- Angular Measures and Distance
- Stating the Location of Objects in the Sky
- Star-Hopping
- Eyepiece Field Orientation
- Recording Your Observations

- The Art of Seeing
- The Moon
- Variable Stars
- The Sun

The Universe Sampler Program.

The Astronomical League offers special recognition in the form of a Universe Sampler Program Certificate for those that have completed either the "naked eye" or the "telescope" path. You may complete both programs and get two certificates. To obtain an award you must observe the following rules:

- You must be a member of the Astronomical League either through an affiliated club or as Member at Large.
- Use of setting circles, computer driven telescopes (except for tracking purposes only) or any electronic device used to locate objects is NOT allowed. The purpose of the *Universe Sampler* program is to help the beginner learn his or her way around the sky. Use of the devices mentioned above would defeat the purpose of the program. Instead, use the star-hop method to locate objects. Refer to the lesson on star-hopping.
- You must complete Object List I as naked-eye observations. You must complete either Object List II as telescopic/binocular observations or Object List III as naked-eye observations.
- You must keep a log of your observations stating the object number or name, date/time and location, seeing conditions, size of instrument and magnification (or naked-eye observation) and your description of the object.
- You may copy the log sheets in the back of the manual for your use.

Upon completion of the program, submit your log sheets to an officer or appointed person from your club for verification. A letter from that person should be sent to the address above requesting your certificate and pin. Members at Large should submit copies of log sheets to the address above since originals will not be returned unless you supply a postage paid return envelope.

The Universe Sampler is designed specifically as a teaching aid for the beginning observer. Due to the program's design and purpose, the object lists are not available separate from the manual. You can order the manual from Astronomical League Sales.