Student User Guide for AstroPortal

Investigating Astronomy

Slater & Freedman
Getting Started with AstroPortal for Slater & Freedman, *Investigating Astronomy*

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Overview

Welcome to AstroPortal, your complete Web-based study tool for Timothy F. Slater & Roger A. Freedman’s *Investigating Astronomy: A Conceptual View of the Universe*. Not only does it lighten your backpack by offering online access to your textbook and other course materials, but communication tools make it easier to connect with your class community. With AstroPortal, you can:

- Follow a personalized study plan that helps you assess your progress in learning each chapter’s material.
- Work with supplemental resource material, such as tutorials, animations, videos, and flashcards.
- Do homework with instant grading and feedback.
- Take and share online notes.
- Participate in discussion forums and chat rooms.
- Communicate with your teacher and/or other students via course email.

*Note: Depending on how your instructor has configured the AstroPortal for your class, you may not have access to all these features.*

This guide is designed to get you into the course software, introduce you to the main features, and leave you comfortable enough to begin working in the AstroPortal on your own.

Getting Help

AstroPortal includes a comprehensive help system with step-by-step instructions for performing a variety of tasks in the program. To access it, click the Help (?) button in the bottom-left corner of the screen. (Note: this online help system is available after you’ve logged in to AstroPortal.)

For questions that aren’t answered by the help system, contact AstroPortal Technical Support, available 24/7. Call 1-800-936-6899.
System Requirements

The following Web browsers are formally supported and tested for use with AstroPortal:

- **Windows**: Internet Explorer version 6 or 7 and Firefox version 1.0 and above.
- **Mac OS X**: Firefox version 1.5 and above.

In addition, some AstroPortal resources require Adobe Shockwave Player, Adobe Flash Player, Apple QuickTime (5.0 or above), Java, or Adobe Acrobat (version 6 or above). The latest versions of these plug-ins can be downloaded free of charge from Adobe, Sun, or Apple Web sites.

To see which plug-ins you have installed and to find installers, go to the online help system and select the **System Check** link from the System Requirements section or go directly to [http://courses.bfwpub.com/syscheck/](http://courses.bfwpub.com/syscheck/).

**Note**: To view some features of the Portal, you may need to turn off your browser’s pop-up blocker, and any pop-up blocker(s) in third-party toolbars you may have added to your browser, such as the Google or Yahoo toolbar.
Registering for the Course

To get access to AstroPortal, you have two options:

1. Purchase access to AstroPortal through the campus bookstore (either packaged with a printed textbook or by itself).
2. Purchase access to AstroPortal directly from our website.

Option One: Registration with an Activation Code

1. Go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/slater and select the REGISTER an Activation Code link. The following registration screen will appear.
2. Then, enter your Activation Code, name, and e-mail address. Your email address will serve as your username for AstroPortal.
3. Create a password. The password must be at least 4 characters long and should be something memorable.
4. Optionally supply a password hint.
5. After confirming your email address, select your school location (stateprovince) from the drop-down menu at the bottom of the screen. A new drop-down menu will then appear where you can choose your institution; then a course/instructor drop-down menu will appear where you can select your course.
6. Click NEXT at the bottom of this screen, confirm your information on the following screen, and click CREATE ACCOUNT to complete the registration process.
Option Two: Purchase Access Directly Via the Site

1. Go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/slater and select PURCHASE access to AstroPortal and then select your state/province from the drop down menu. You will then be prompted to select your institution and your course from additional drop-down menus.
2. Enter an email address and password, as described in the Activation Code instructions on page 3.
3. Enter payment information including your name (as it appears on the credit card); card number, expiration date, and billing address, then click NEXT. After confirming your information, you should click PLACE YOUR ORDER.
4. Once you have placed your order and the system has confirmed payment, you will see a screen that says "Thank You," and confirms your name, email address, username, and password. You will also receive a confirmation email.

Note: You won’t be able to change your email address once you have registered, so you must choose an address that will be valid for the duration of the course.

Once you have completed this process, go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/slater, enter your email address and password, and click LOG IN (see below).

Logging in to the Course

To login to the AstroPortal course, go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/slater. Supply your email address and password and click LOG IN.

If you have any trouble with a log-in id or password, call 1-800-936-6899 or contact technical support via email at techsupport@bfwpub.com.
The AstroPortal Home Page

Once you’ve logged in to AstroPortal, the home page appears. From here, you can access all the information, tools, and resources in AstroPortal.

*Note:* Your instructor can customize this home page to suit the needs of your class, so what you see may not exactly match what is shown here.

Note: If you have a visual disability, click 508 in the bottom-left corner to switch to a version of AstroPortal that is compliant with the 508 amendment to the American Rehabilitation Act. This version is compatible with screen-reader software.
The AstroPortal eBook

The AstroPortal eBook is a complete online version of Timothy F. Slater & Roger A. Freedman’s *Investigating Astronomy: A Conceptual View of the Universe*. Links throughout the eBook connect to numerous study tools, such as tutorials, animations, videos and flashcards—all designed to make your learning experience more effective and engaging.

To open the eBook’s table of contents, click the eBook tab at the top of the page. From there, select the chapter or section where you want to go. You can also jump directly to a chapter by selecting it from the eBook drop-down list on the home page.

Once you’re in the eBook, use the navigation pane (on the left) and the Previous and Next links to get around a chapter or to go to another chapter. Use the Search box in the upper-right corner of the window to jump to the eBook section corresponding to a given printed page, or use it to find information on any given topic.

Every section contains hyperlinks to additional material, related sections, learning tools, and glossary definitions. To highlight a phrase, double-click it. To bookmark a section or add your own notes, click the eBook Tools button.
Taking Notes

At the top of every eBook section, you’ll see any notes your instructor has added. You can add your own notes to the section as well. To add a note, click the eBook Tools button and choose Add Note from the Tools menu.

In the displayed Note Box, type the text of your note. Use buttons to the right to add bold or italic text or to insert a link to a Web site.

Use the drop-down list to specify your note as Public (anyone to whom you give permission can view, but only you can edit), Shared (those to whom you give permission can view and edit), or Private (only you can view). Click Save to save your note. To edit the saved note later, click the Edit icon in the note’s top-left corner.

Note: For more on sharing notes, refer to the AstroPortal online help.

Accessing AstroPortal Resources

AstroPortal comes with an abundance of online resources to aid your learning process: tutorials, animations, flashcards and more. Your instructor can also upload additional resources for the course.

Learning resources are embedded throughout the eBook, and a section at the end of each chapter lists that chapter’s resources.

Note: Your instructor may also add resources directly in the eBook.
You can also access from through the Resources page. Click the **RESOURCES** tab (or click the Resources link on the home page if available).

In addition to resources supplied by the publisher, your instructor may add course-specific resources, such as discussion forums or lecture slides. These are listed directly on the Resources page.

To view AstroPortal Resources, select a type of resource from the Student Resources drop-down list and a chapter from the Chapters drop-down, then click **go**. Click on any of the displayed resources to access it.

**Viewing Assignments**

When your instructor creates an assignment in AstroPortal, it is added to your Assignments page. AstroPortal keeps track of what assignments you’ve completed and when upcoming assignments are due.

To view all assignments, both past and upcoming, click the **ASSIGNMENTS** tab. (Assignments due in the current week may also be listed on your home page).

The Assignments page lists all of your course assignments. It shows due date, gradebook points, and status. You can use the **Sort Assignments by** drop-down box to change the order in which assignments are listed. Click an assignment to jump to it.

Due dates for assignments are also entered in your course calendar. Click **Go to Calendar** to display the calendar.
Checking Your Grades

Click the Grades link on the home page to check your current status in the course. This link is available under Course Work and may also be listed under Gradebook, if available. The Grades page shows your current overall grade at the top of the page. Grades for each assignment follow, along with any comments entered by your instructor.

Course Mail

AstroPortal includes its own email system for communicating with your instructor and others in your course. Your instructor will use this course mail to send out reminders or to communicate directly with you. To access your course mail, click Inbox in the Communicate area of your home page. (Or click Compose to jump directly into writing an email.)

Note: your course mail will be automatically forwarded to the email address you use to sign in to the portal. To change your email forwarding address, click the Preferences button in the sidebar on the left of your screen. Click System Settings, page down to Mail Settings and enter the email address to forward your mail to at the bottom of the page. Select a forwarding mode, and click Save. When you reply to forwarded course mail, the reply is sent through the outside email associated with the sender, not through the course mail system.
Your Course Mail inbox will look like this:

To send an email, click Compose (from either the Course Mail page or the home page). Click Add Recipients and add course members to the To, CC, or BCC lists, then click OK. Type the subject and email text, then click Send.

Your Compose Message screen will look like this:

For technical support call 1-800-936-6899.