Student User Guide for AstroPortal

*Discovering the Universe, Eighth Edition*

Comins, Kaufmann
Getting Started with AstroPortal for Comins & Kaufmann, Discovering the Universe, Eighth Edition

Table of Contents

Overview ............................................................................................................................................. 1
Getting Help ....................................................................................................................................... 1
System Requirements ........................................................................................................................ 2
Registering for the Course .................................................................................................................. 3
Logging in to the Course .................................................................................................................... 4
The AstroPortal Home Page ............................................................................................................... 5
The AstroPortal eBook ....................................................................................................................... 6
Taking Notes ................................................................................................................................... 7
Accessing AstroPortal Resources .................................................................................................... 7
Viewing Quizzes & Assignments ....................................................................................................... 8
Checking Your Grades ....................................................................................................................... 9
Course Mail ..................................................................................................................................... 9
Overview

Welcome to AstroPortal, your complete Web-based study tool for Neil F. Comins’s and William J. Kaufmann’s *Discovering the Universe, Eighth Edition*. Not only does it lighten your backpack by offering online access to your textbook and other resources, 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 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

Details on using the many AstroPortal features and tools are available in Online Help.

1. Once you’ve logged in, Click the Help button in the lower-left corner of the AstroPortal window.
2. Click on highlighted words, arrows, and image icons for detailed directions or more information about a topic.

For questions that aren’t answered by the help system, contact AstroPortal Technical Support. 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 System Check page, available from the AstroPortal Welcome Screen, the online help system (in the System Requirements section), or directly at [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 an activation code for AstroPortal through the campus bookstore (either packaged with a printed textbook or by itself).
2. Purchase access to AstroPortal directly from our web site.

Option One: Registration with an Activation Code

1. Go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/dtu8e.php 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.

   **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.

3. Create a password and a password hint. The password must be at least 4 characters long and should be something memorable.
4. After confirming your email address, select your school location (state/province) 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.
5. Click **NEXT** at the bottom of this screen, confirm your information on the following screen, and click **CREATE ACCOUNT** to complete the registration process.

For technical support call 1-800-936-6899.
Option Two: Purchase Access Directly Via the Site

1. Go to http://courses.bfwpub.com/dtu8e.php, select PURCHASE access to AstroPortal and 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. You will set up a profile that will be used to access the portal. 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, click PLACE YOUR ORDER.
4. Once the system has confirmed payment, a thank you screen will display that confirms your name, email address, username, and password. You will also receive a confirmation email. Once the payment has been processed, you will be able to log into the portal using the profiles set up in Step 2. You will not need an Activation Code.

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/dtu8e.php, 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/dtu8e.php. 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.
The AstroPortal eBook

The AstroPortal eBook is a complete online version of Comins and Kaufmann’s *Discovering the Universe, Eighth Edition*. Links throughout the eBook connect to numerous study tools, such as tutorials, animations, and flashcards – all designed to make the learning experience more effective and relevant.

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 AstroPortal QuickStart area of your 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. Jump to the eBook section corresponding to a page in the printed text by entering the page number in the Search box in the upper right corner of the window, or use the search for a list of eBook sections and resources about any given topic. Use the Open in new window link to keep an eBook page open while you visit other Portal content.

Every chapter contains a Personalized Study Plan, which guides you to materials to review based on your responses to a diagnostic quiz.

Use the Navigation Pane to jump to a chapter or section.

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.

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

Throughout the eBook, 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 the toolbar in the Note Box to add formatting or links to your Note.

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 the resources for the chapter. You can also access these through the Resources page.

Click the Resources tab from anywhere in the portal.

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.

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

Note: Your instructor may also add resources directly in the eBook.
Viewing Quizzes & Assignments

When your instructor creates an assignment in AstroPortal, it is added to your Quizzes & 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 Center tab. (Assignments due in the current week may also be listed on your home page).

The Assignments Center 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 at the top right 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 in the Course Work area of the Home Page. 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.
Below is an overview of the Course Mail inbox. Please refer to the online help for more information.

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: