

Astronomy 101: On-Line Homework and Weekly Reading Quizzes

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→ Note that the website at which the weekly reading quizzes will be taken will not be available for registration until Thursday, September 2.

An important component of this class will be the weekly assignments and reading quizzes that you will complete on-line at the textbook website. This document describes how to register for the on-line access, and then how to work with the on-line content. Note that the first Reading Quiz is not due until the start of the *third* week of class (specifically, it's due on Tuesday, September 14, at 11:55 PM).

Registering for On-Line Access

To register for on-line access, please follow the following steps *exactly*:

1. Point your WEB browser to: <http://www.ilm.com>
2. Click on "Create an Account" (under the "New Users" category). You will then be presented with several registration screens.
3. Select California from the drop-down menu.
4. Enter San Diego State University in the "school name" area, and then click on "Search".
5. Click the button next to "San Diego State University (San Diego, CA)" on the "Select your school" screen, then click "continue".
6. On the "Course Key/Access Code" screen, select the 1st choice: "My instructor gave me a code to register for a class". Once you do that, a place to enter your Course Key will appear on the screen.
7. In the "Course Key" area, enter the following Course Key: **E-3PG4NCXYXQDW8**
→ Click "Continue".
8. Fill out the next form that comes up with your information:
 - (a) Enter your email address (twice).
 - (b) Enter your chosen password (twice).
→ **Be sure to write down your email address and chosen password, since these are the two items that will be required in order to log back into the system in the future.**
 - (c) Choose and answer the security question.
 - (d) Enter first and last name exactly as you are registered in the course.
 - (e) **For "Student ID", enter just the first 8 digits of your 9-digit RedID number.** (The system will not accept 9 digits.)
 - (f) Click on the "I agree" button below the "End User License Agreement".
 - (g) Click "continue". You should then be welcomed with a "Welcome to CengageNOW!" screen, saying that you have successfully registered. If this is NOT the case, redo steps 1 through 8, being careful to type in *exactly* what is required. (In rare cases, you may get returned to the

same screen with the warning: “You are already registered”. If this happens to you, see the information in the footnote¹ at the bottom of this page.)

9. Click on the “Enter CengageNOW” button.

→ The system will then run a “System Check” to see that your current WEB browser is supported.² If all is OK, go onto the next step!

In some cases, it may request that you install a different/upgraded browser and/or software (e.g., java virtual machine) or allow popup windows.³ If possible, you should take the actions that it requests. However, I have found that “unsupported browsers” (e.g., Firefox on Macs) may still work just fine, so you can give them a shot. If things don’t work properly, then you will need to install one of the “supported” browsers.⁴

→ If all else fails, note that the Web browsers available on computers in Love Library all work properly at the web site, so:

If your home browser does not work, just go to the library!

10. At this point, you are fully registered, and should be greeted with a “Home” page that should show you all of the assignments that are available for you to take. Do not click on any of the assignments shown: It is important that you now exit the site by clicking on “Sign out” in the upper right-hand corner of the screen, and then proceed to follow all of the instructions in the “Using the Textbook Web Site” section of this handout, below.

Using the Textbook Web Site⁵

Nearly every week in the course, you will have an on-line assignment that will consist of two sections: (1) *Tutorial*; and (2) *Reading Quiz*. These will be presented to you as, e.g., “Tutorial: Chapter 1” and “Quiz: 1”. Only the *quiz* section is graded; the *tutorial* section is just to help you understand the concepts, and is formally optional. In this *handout*, we’ll use the material presented in your “Week 2 Handout” as the example, since it’s the first one you’ll be doing. So, here’s how to access this online content:

1. Point your WEB browser to: <http://www.ilrn.com> .

2. Click on “Sign In”, under “Returning Users”.

→ Note: Sometimes, at this point a screen will come up asking you to enter your state and school. Should this happen, just follow the on-screen instructions and then continue with step 3 below when you are requested to enter your email address.

3. Enter your email address and password on the “Sign in as returning user” screen that comes up.

¹If you get returned to the same screen with the warning: “You are already registered”, this indicates that you are actually *already* registered with the CengageNOW website. This will happen, e.g., if you already made an account with CengageNOW in another course, either this semester or even in an earlier semester. If this is the case, then do the following: First, get back to the original login screen at <http://www.ilrn.com>. Click “Sign-in” under “Returning Users”. Enter your email address and password (if you have forgotten it, you can have it emailed to you), and click “sign in”. Click on the “Courses” tab. Click on “Register for another course”. Enter the course key: E-3PG4NCXYXQDW8, and click “Use This Course Key”. You are now registered! To access the course material now after logging in, click on the “Courses” tab, and then click on “Principles of Astronomy, Fall 2010”. Then, click on the “Assignments” tab. Once you’ve done this, you should be able to follow the instructions under the “Taking the Weekly Reading Quiz” section of this handout.

²Currently, supported browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox for Windows operating systems (both of which are available on the Love Library computers); Safari for Macs; and Mozilla Firefox for Linux systems.

³Note that to *print* the reading quizzes (optional, but helpful), Adobe Acrobat Reader 4.05b or higher must be installed. You can get the Adobe Acrobat Reader for free from <http://get.adobe.com/reader/> .

⁴You can get help with your browser by going to: <http://www.ilrn.com>, and then clicking on “Browser Setup Help” under “User’s Resources” for “Students”.

⁵A complete user’s guide can be found at: <http://www.ilrn.com> . The *guide* presented in this *handout* just gives directions essential for completion of the assignments in this class.

4. After a “system check”, you are presented with a screen that should display current “assignments”; note that I say *should*, since this “Home” page is flaky, and does not always show the correct assignments. To properly see all of your assignments, go onto the next step.
5. **Click on the “Assignments/Tests” tab at the top of the page.** (The “Assignments/Tests” tab is one of 6 tabs located at the top of the page, called: “Home”, “Courses”, “Grades”, “Assignments/Tests”, “Study Tools”, and “Communication”.) It is important that you always click on the Assignments/Tests tab before doing anything else on the website! Go onto the next step.
6. The “Assignments” page comes up, where you will see that you have a “Quiz: 1” as well as a “Tutorial: Chapter 1”.
7. (Optional) Click on the “Print blank assignment” under the “Actions” column, for “Quiz: 1”. Up will come a printable version of the complete Reading Quiz for this week. Print this out, if you wish. This is your first reading quiz *that you will complete online* after hopefully having read the chapter and worked through the (optional) *Tutorial: Chapter 1* material (details on the tutorials are given below, in the section entitled *Reviewing the Weekly Tutorial Material*). Note that printing a hard copy of the quiz is just for your own use; you will not be turning anything in in class.

Taking the Weekly Reading Quiz

Like all weekly Reading Quizzes, the first one (covering the first two weeks of course material, due 11:55 PM on Tuesday, September 14) is open book, open note, and you may even work with friends (although you must complete your own, separate, quiz on-line). And **you are allowed to take the quiz twice**, so that you can (hopefully) correct any answers that you got wrong the first time through. You can return at any time prior to the assignment’s due date to finish/retake the quiz. So, when you are ready to take the week’s Reading Quiz:

8. Click on the “Take” button under the “Actions” column, for “Quiz: 1”.
 - (a) Click on the “Start assignment now” button.
 - (b) You will then be given the week’s reading quiz, one question at a time. In general, these questions will be multiple choice, but occasionally short answer or essay questions may be asked. For this week (and for most weeks), there are 10 questions. The first question for this week asks:

Astronomers refer to the distance that light travels in on year as followed by 5 choices.
 - (c) Click on the choice that you think is correct.
 - (d) Click on the “Enter Answer” button. You are then automatically moved onto question #2. At any point while taking the quiz, you can *save* your work without actually submitting it to be graded by clicking on the *Save & exit* button (note that, as far as I can tell, the “Save My Progress” link does not actually work, so don’t click on that). If you do chose to save your work, you can “resume” taking the quiz at any point up until the due date (but do make sure you *submit* it by the due date!).
 - (e) Enter answers for all ten quiz questions. When you are finished with the last question and click on Enter Answer, a little “pop-up” window will appear, asking: “Would you like to submit and exit this assignment?”
 - (f) Click the “Submit for Grading” button on the pop-up window. That should complete your first “take” of the assignment. (Note that with some Web browsers I’ve noticed that simply clicking the OK button will not actually submit your quiz but will, instead, return you to the last question page. If this happens, simply click on the “Submit assignment for grading” button, and it will be submitted.)
 - (g) You then will see a screen titled “Assignment Finished”, with your score (percentage correct) below it. You then have several options presented to you under the heading: “What would you like to do next?”

- (h) Click on “View Assignment Results”. This will take you to a page where you can see which questions you answered correctly, or incorrectly. Clicking on the number of the question itself will allow you to view the questions again. If you got a 100% on the quiz, then you are done! If not, *you can retake the quiz one more time*, either now, or at a later date (before the due date). Only the final score counts towards your grade!
 - (i) When you are through looking over your quiz results, click on the “Assignment/Tests” tab at the top of the page. You can then choose to “Retake” the quiz, or sign out and return later to take it again.
9. **Retaking the reading quiz.** You are permitted to take each Reading Quiz twice (if you get 100% on the first try, there is no need to take it a second time), and only your best score counts. So, to “Retake” the reading quiz:
- (a) Sign in to the website as before, and click on the “Assignments/Tests” tab.
 - (b) Click on “Retake” under the “Actions” column, in the “Quiz: 1” row.
 - (c) Click on the “Start assignment” button.
 - (d) You will then be re-given the week’s reading quiz. On this second time through, you need only re-answer questions that you answered incorrectly the first time. The incorrectly answered questions are indicated by open circles next to the question numbers that are located along the left-hand column under the “Question” heading (a filled circle means you got it right the first time). Click on each question number that you answered incorrectly, and re-answer the question.
 - (e) When you are through re-answering all incorrectly answered questions, click on the “Submit assignment for grading” button, just like you did on the first take.
 - (f) After confirming that you wish to submit your quiz, you’ll be brought to a screen similar to the one you were presented with after your first take, where you can review your (now fully completed) quiz.
10. *Solutions* to each week’s reading quiz are posted to the textbook website 10 minutes after the quiz is due (i.e., at 12:05 AM). Note that these solutions are not just answers: They are complete, worked-out solutions with explanations.

At the textbook web-site, you can access the solutions by clicking on the “Assignment/Tests” tab, and then clicking on either the “Print blank assignment” link or the “Take” button next to e.g., “Quiz 1: Solutions”. Clicking on the “Print blank assignment” link produces a pdf file of the solutions that can be printed out. Clicking on the “Take” button allows you to “take” the quiz again, but this time with the solutions included. Note that if you “take” the quiz again, it is completely *ungraded*; it’s just for your practice.

Note that a pdf of the solutions will also be posted to the *course* website (<http://sciences.sdsu.edu/~leonard/astro101>) by the end of the week that a quiz is due. The quiz solutions are accessed by clicking on the “On-Line Reading Quiz Solutions” link on the course home-page.

Getting the Most out of the Weekly Reading Quiz

Please remember that these quizzes are designed *to prepare you for exams*. While the quiz is open book and open notes, and you may even consult with friends, I believe the absolute best way to use these quizzes to your advantage is to follow these steps:

1. *Come* to lecture and do all of the assigned reading.
2. *Study* all of the material that was covered as best you can.
3. *Print* out a copy of the Reading Quiz, from the textbook web-site.

4. *Take* the Reading Quiz first on paper, and circle any questions whose answer you are unsure of. (Note: You will not be turning this paper in; all graded work for the Reading Quiz is done online.)
5. *Determine* the correct answer to any difficult questions by reviewing your class notes or rereading the textbook or Reader sections that were assigned. You may also seek assistance from me during my office hours, or from the TAs during the astronomy help-room hours.
6. *Make* a note of how many questions you answered correctly without any assistance; this gives you a rough indication of how well you had studied the material for the week on your own. Are you satisfied with this grade (consult the grading chart on page 5 of the syllabus, if necessary)?
7. *Take* the Reading Quiz online at the textbook website.
8. *Retake* the Reading Quiz a second time, if necessary.
9. *Review* the solutions to the Reading Quiz, which become available at the textbook website 10 minutes after the quiz is due, and are posted to the course web-site within a few days. Even if you got a 100% on the quiz, the solutions are still very useful to review, as they may contain extra information of importance.
10. *Get help* if there are any questions that you have with the Reading Quiz, or any of the material presented during the past week by visiting either my office hours or the TA help room hours.

Reviewing the Weekly Tutorial Material

The on-line weekly tutorial material that is assigned each week as part of your Reading Assignment is formally *optional*. It is strongly recommended that you review it, though, as it will better prepare you for the reading quiz as well as the in-class exams. However, note that *none of the work that you do in the “tutorial” section is graded or is counted towards your homework grade*. To access the tutorial material:

1. Follow steps 1 – 5 under the “Using the Textbook Web Site” section above, to get to the “Assignments/Tests” page of the web-site.
2. Click on the “Enter content access code” button under the “Actions” column, for the “Tutorial: Chapter 1”. To access the tutorial material you must have a “Content Access Code”, which comes free with every new copy of the textbook (which is why buying a new copy was recommended on the course syllabus!). Note that if you bought a used copy of the text (and the Access Code was used by the previous owner), and wish to have access to the tutorial material, you can purchase a new Access Code on-line – details on how to do this are given in the footnote below.⁶
3. On the screen that comes up, enter the Access Code that came with your new textbook (or you purchased separately). The “Content Access Code” is written inside a card that is *attached* to the inside cover of your new book – the card says “Ace Astronomy” on it, and when you open it up (you have to *unseal* the card, separating two glued-together layers of paper) it says: “Here is the Access Code for Your FREE On-line Access”, and a 20 or 21 digit access code is printed. The access code usually begins with the letters “FMV”, and may include symbols (e.g., *, -, etc.) in addition to letters and numbers. Note that the access code is *NOT* the “serial number” contained in the “Virtual Astronomy Laboratories” insert, nor is it the code that may be packaged with your text for access to “InfoTrac”, which is an on-line database of articles.

⁶If you don’t have an Access Code and wish to purchase one, you can buy one (for \$33.49) by doing the following: On the “Enter a Content Access Code” screen, click on “Purchase an access code”; type the ISBN number 0-495-10568-6 into the “Find Your Textbook or Materials” space that appears on the “cengagebrain.com” web page that comes up, and click “Search”; next, click on the “Add to Cart” link next to the “AceAstronomy Instant Access Code for Fraknoi/Morrison/Wolff’s Voyages to the Stars and Galaxies, 3rd Edition” that appears on the next screen. Click “OK” on the popup window that comes up next, which asks you if you are sure you wish to purchase this item. Then click on “See my Cart”, and then click on “Checkout”. Fill out all of the forms that come up. At the end, you should be given a new, valid Content Access code! Once you have this access code, just proceed with step 3 above and follow the same directions as for students who purchased a new textbook.

4. After entering your access code, click on the “Use this access code” button. The screen should now change to include the lines: “Congratulations! You may now use Fraknoi/Morrison/Wolff: Voyages to the Stars and Galaxies 3e.”
5. Click on the “Assignments/Tests” tab button at the top of the page.
6. Now, click on the “Take” button under the “Actions” column, for the “Tutorial: Chapter 1”.
 - (a) Click on the “Start assignment now” button.
 - (b) You are now presented a page that says “Are You Ready for Your Exam?” at the top, and has a list of items running down the left-hand column under the heading “Personalized Study Plan”. Each of these items is “clickable”, and will bring you to a new page of content.
 - (c) In your “Week # 2 Handout” (available in your Course Reader, as well as at the course web-site), the “Reading Guide and Homework Assignment” section includes specific assignments to complete in the *tutorial* section. Many students also find the “Glossary” to be useful. The first “Active Figure” that will be assigned for you to look at is the one called “Celestial Sphere”.
 - (d) Click on the Active Figure called “Celestial Sphere”. Up comes an applet that shows the portion of the celestial sphere that is visible from a particular location on Earth. Read the information presented. At the bottom of the applet page, you’ll see four page numbers.
 - (e) Click on page “2” at the bottom of the applet. Up comes a description of the Celestial sphere. Review this material – it should mostly be familiar to you based on what we covered in class, as well as what you read in the textbook. (Note that two additional terms – Right Ascension and Declination – are introduced, and were not covered explicitly in class or in the reading from this chapter. You are not responsible for knowing these terms.)
 - (f) Click on page “3” at the bottom of the applet. An interactive screen comes up. Follow the instructions by clicking on the Earth. In the zoomed-in view presented, click first on the North Pole of the Earth. See what happens! Repeat this process, and click on the South Pole. Notice how the horizon and, thus, the part of the celestial sphere that is visible to the observer changes. Do you understand why this is happening? Try clicking on other parts of the Earth as well.
 - (g) (Optional) Notice that along the right-hand side of the applet is a question. See if you can answer it correctly. (Note that you will *never* be graded for anything that you do in the “tutorial” assignment, including questions that you answer — it is all just to assist your learning.)
 - (h) (Optional) Click on page “4” at the bottom of the applet. If you wish, you can click on the web-site link that is presented for more information about the celestial sphere.
 - (i) You can now repeat this process for all of the assigned *Active Figures* and/or *Astronomy Exercises*.
 - (j) When you are through, click on the “Submit assignment for grading” button at the bottom (or top) of the page. Note, though, that this button is a bit of a misnomer, as *none of your work in the “tutorial” section is actually graded*. By clicking “Submit assignment for grading” I will just see that you have looked at the material – no grades are associated with it. Note that, after “submitting”, you may return to the tutorial section at any point in the future, if you wish; there are no limits placed on the number of times you may “take” the tutorial.

Avoiding Problems with the Web Site

The textbook web-site is generally quite stable and problem-free, so long as you *always* obey the following **golden rule**:

If you need to leave your computer for any reason while you are in the middle of taking a reading quiz, always click the *Save & exit* button, and then logout of the web-site.

Please, please, please do not ever leave your computer while taking a Reading Quiz without first logging completely out, since the textbook web-site has one MAJOR flaw: If you are in the middle of taking a Reading Quiz, and then either (1) leave your computer idle for more than 2 hours, or (2) log into the textbook web-site using a different computer or web browser, *it will automatically “submit” your unfinished Reading Quiz*. This is very bad, as it will use up one of your two “takes” of the quiz, and usually result in a low score since you were not done taking it.

Troubleshooting

So long as you follow the “golden rule” given above, odds are you will have no problems with the web-site. However, if you do encounter problems (e.g., the web-site will not let you log in, take the quiz, submit a quiz, etc.), please follow the following procedure:

1. Completely log out of the web site, totally close your web browser, and, if possible, reboot your machine.
2. Log back in to the web-site. 9 times out of 10, everything will now work just fine. Just remember the *mantra*:

When in doubt, log out.

3. If all else has failed (i.e., you’ve followed the *golden rule*, and have logged out and back in), and things *still* are not functioning properly, then you may email me with your concerns, and I’ll see if I can help. Please note, though, that in order to get assistance **you must email me before 7 PM on the night the Reading Quiz is due** (Reading Quizzes are generally due at 11:55 PM on Tuesday nights).

Emails received before 7 PM on the night a Reading Quiz is due are guaranteed a response from me by 10 PM that same night (usually much quicker; it’s up to you to remember to check your email for my response!). If you email me after 7 PM on the night a quiz is due, I can’t promise that I will be able to assist you in time for you to complete your quiz. And, please remember that no late quizzes will be accepted. So, to prevent problems, please complete your quizzes before the final minutes!