

The Better to See Stars with

The earliest telescopes—called refracting telescopes—consisted of glass lenses mounted in a tube. But when light from objects was viewed through these telescopes, a fuzzy spectrum of colors appeared around the edges of the images. To solve this problem, Newton designed a telescope that used mirrors rather than lenses. In his reflecting telescope, one mirror focuses the light onto a second smaller mirror, which in turn, focuses the light to a point on an eyepiece. Most of today's large telescopes work on the same principle as Newton's first design.

