**Book: Astronomy (OpenStax)**

*Astronomy* is defined as the study of the objects that lie beyond our planet Earth and the processes by which these objects interact with one another. We will see, though, that it is much more. It is also humanity’s attempt to organize what we learn into a clear history of the universe, from the instant of its birth in the Big Bang to the present moment. Throughout this book, we emphasize that science is a *progress report*—one that changes constantly as new techniques and instruments allow us to probe the universe more deeply.

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Thumbnail: Note the two smaller eruptions before the big one. The Sun’s upper atmosphere (corona) is shown here. (CC BY-SA 3.0 Unported; Patrick McCauley/From Quarks to Quasars/SDO via Wikipedia).