

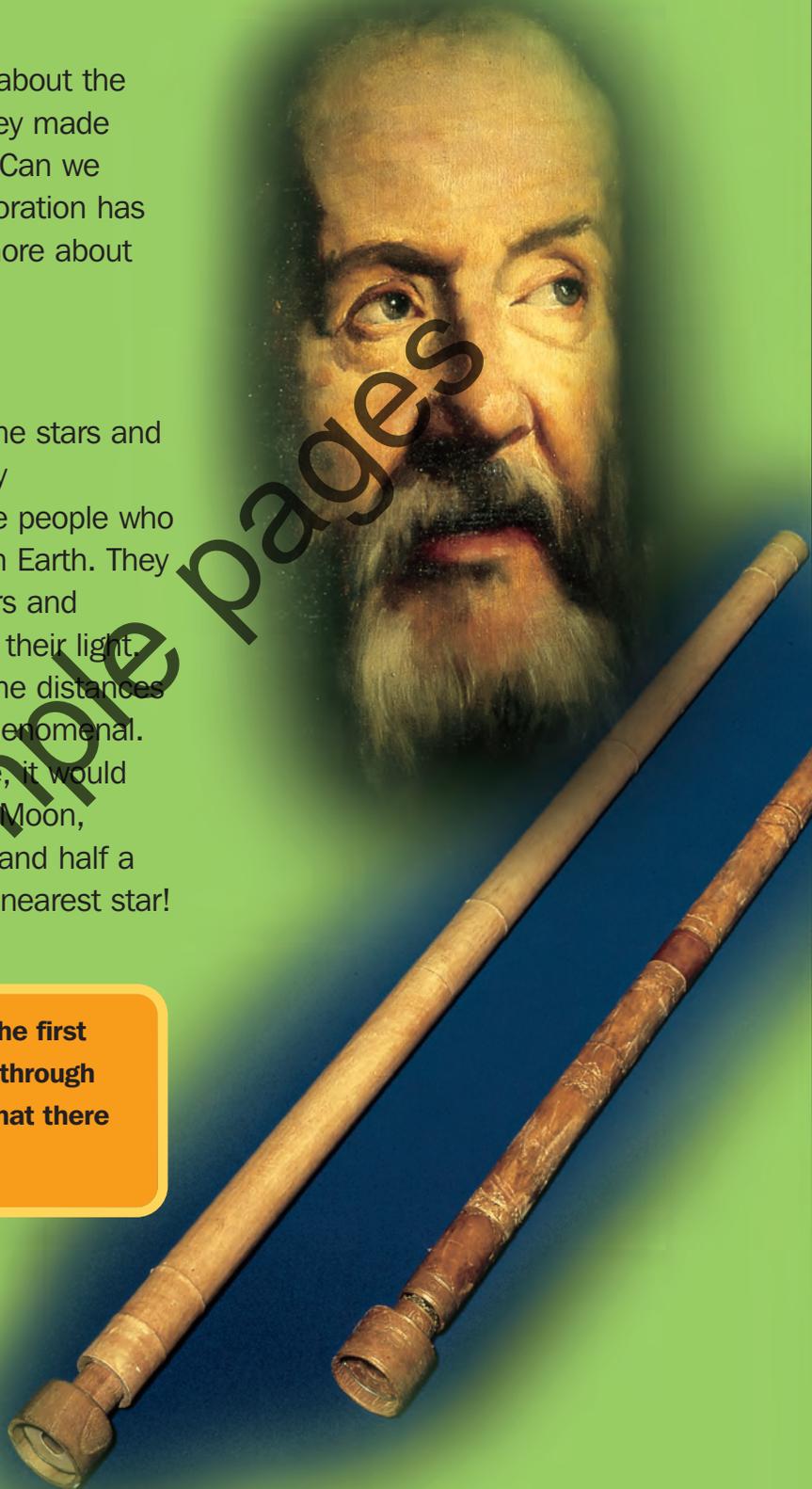
WHY DO PEOPLE EXPLORE SPACE?

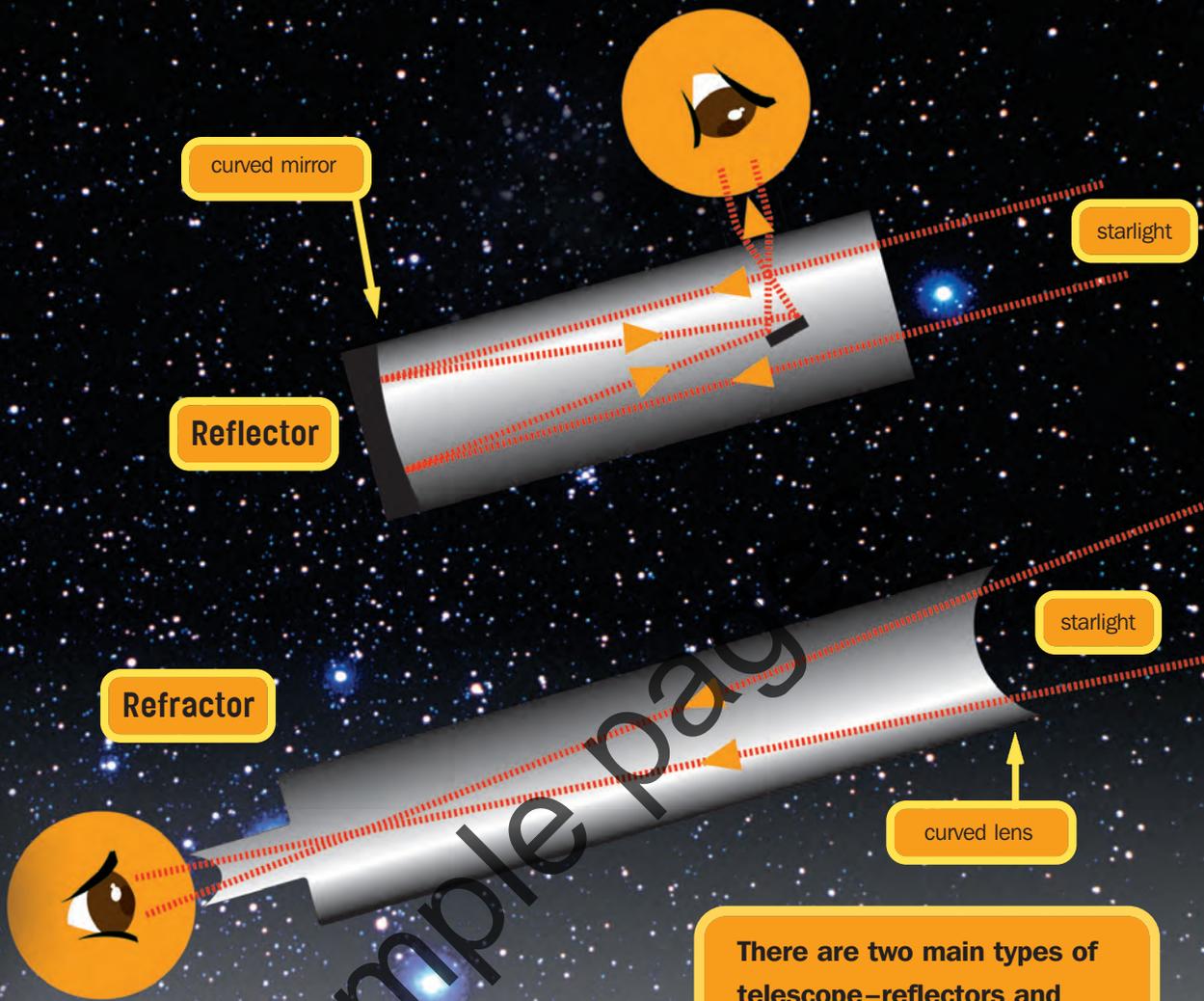
People have always wondered about the stars and planets. What are they made from? How far away are they? Can we travel to the stars? Space exploration has enabled us to find out much more about the universe.

Studying the sky

Most of what we know about the stars and planets has been discovered by **astronomers**. Astronomers are people who study the objects in space from Earth. They use telescopes to see how stars and planets move, and to measure their light. Astronomers have found that the distances to the planets and stars are phenomenal. At the speed of a fast jet plane, it would take sixteen days to reach the Moon, twenty years to reach the Sun and half a million years to reach the next nearest star!

Italian scientist Galileo was the first astronomer to look at space through a telescope. He discovered that there are mountains on the Moon.





There are two main types of telescope—reflectors and refractors. A reflector uses a curved mirror to collect starlight and reflect it into the viewer's eye. A refractor uses a curved lens to gather the light and form an image.

Travelling into space

Forty years ago, no-one had travelled into space. Now astronauts travel into orbit around the Earth. They try out science experiments, repair **satellites** and test space travel equipment. The furthest that anyone has travelled from Earth is to the Moon and back. In the future, as the Earth becomes more crowded, people may set out to live on the Moon and on other planets.

