

Re: Starter scope for 9 year old: StarBlast or SkyQuest?

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I've got to weigh in on this.

I had an alt-azim 4.5 inch reflector when I was about that age. Altazimuth mounts can suck big time. If I got an interesting item centered, by the time I got somebody else to the eyepiece, it often drifted out of view. Positioning an altazimuth scope on an object is difficult for a kid that age, even a nerd like I was. The scope, even though I could handle it, didn't get used often because it was so much work getting an item in the eyepiece. Knowing the sky didn't help, either.

If this nerdy kid is anything like I was at that age, the best gift of all would be to take him to the store and let him help pick it out. You can educate him about the plusses and minuses of the various optical systems and he can help you understand what kind of scope might suit him the best. It could be that the 8" light bucket Dob will be the one, or he may want to go with an equatorial mounted 100mm achromat.

This issue I'm trying to relate here is that many of these choices are very personal ones. If he is sharp and understands the issues, maybe he could provide the best input, rather than us astro freaks on this forum.

Give him a card with some pictures of some scopes and enclose a certificate good for a telescope purchased at your nearby Orion store. I'm sure that he'll be totally blown away at your trust in him to help pick it out.

Just some thoughts on the matter.

Regards,
AWF

LurfysMa wrote:

Re: Starter scope for 9 year old: StarBlast or SkyQuest?

My grandson, age 9, wants a telescope for Christmas. He's kind of a nerdy kid who gets into something and really spends a lot of time with it. His folks are involved and will help him. His only problem is that he can be somewhat impatient and gets frustrated at times.

Anyway, I have read most of the post on this and a couple of other NGs for the past couple of years on beginner scopes. It seems like either the Orion StarBlast or one of the Orion SkyQuest scopes will be the right choice.

Can anyone offer in simple language why they would choose one over the other?

Then, if it's the SkyQuest, should I get the XT4.5, XT6, or XT8? Price is not a big concern. If the XT8 is really better for a kid and the extra power won't just be harder to handle, I'd get the XT8. Otherwise, one of the smaller ones.

All comments and suggestions appreciated.

I will also get him 1-2 of the books and accessories recommended here.

I see that Orion is offering a Bonus Accessory Pack with the XT6 and XT8. See

<http://www.telescope.com/shopping/product/detailmain.jsp?itemID=238462&itemType=PRODUCT&RS=1&>

and

<http://www.telescope.com/shopping/product/detailmain.jsp?itemID=241007&itemType=PRODUCT&iMainC>

Can anyone tell me if I would need anything in addition to whatever is in that package?

Thanks

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