



# Why Send Telescopes into Space?

Some near-infrared light reaches high and dry mountain-top observatories. These windows of atmospheric transparency are centered at 1.25, 1.65, 2.2, 3.5, 4.8 microns. Small amounts of IR light can occasionally be observed from the ground near 10 and 20 microns. Astronomers use high-flying airplanes and balloons to get above most of the atmosphere. Only space-borne infrared observatories, however, provide an unimpeded view of the infrared universe.

