

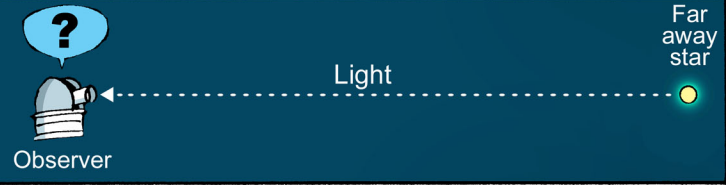
ASTRONOMY IN AFRICA

WOW - THESE STARS ARE BEAUTIFUL. I JUST WISH I COULD SEE THE FAR ONES BETTER!

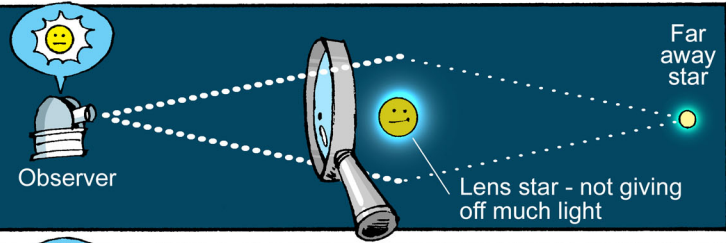
DID YOU KNOW THAT SOUTH AFRICAN SCIENTISTS ARE USING A TECHNIQUE CALLED **GRAVITATIONAL MICROLENSING** TO LOOK DEEPER INTO SPACE?



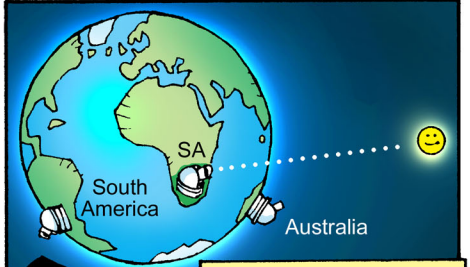
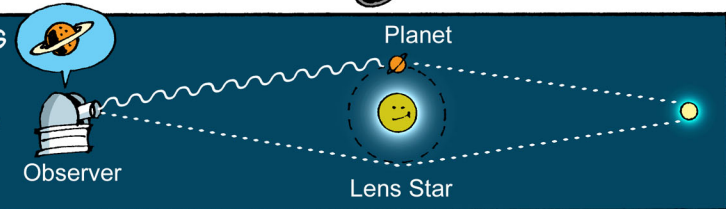
MOST STARS ARE SO FAR AWAY THAT THEIR LIGHT IS EXTREMELY FAINT AND HARD TO OBSERVE.



SOMETIMES A CLOSER STAR MOVES IN FRONT OF A FAR STAR. ITS GRAVITY BENDS THE LIGHT LIKE A MAGNIFYING GLASS DOES. THE FAR STAR BECOMES BRIGHTER.



WHEN A PLANET IS ORBITING THE CLOSER STAR, THE FURTHER STAR GETS EVEN BRIGHTER. SCIENTISTS FIND THE PLANET BY MEASURING THE EXTRA BRIGHTENING.



AND BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICA IS BETWEEN SOUTH AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA, SCIENTISTS CAN SEARCH FOR THESE STARS 24 HOURS A DAY.



AWESOME. I'M GOING TO BECOME A SCIENTIST AND DISCOVER PLANETS THAT CAN'T EVEN BE SEEN!