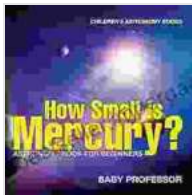


# How Small Is Mercury? Astronomy for Beginners Children Astronomy

Mercury is the smallest planet in our solar system. It is only slightly larger than Earth's moon. Mercury is a rocky planet with a thin atmosphere. It is very hot during the day, but very cold at night. Mercury is not a good place for life as we know it.



## How Small is Mercury? Astronomy Book for Beginners

I Children's Astronomy Books by Baby Professor

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3786 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 64 pages



## Mercury's Size

Mercury has a diameter of 4,879 kilometers (3,031 miles). This makes it the smallest planet in our solar system. Mercury is only slightly larger than Earth's moon, which has a diameter of 3,474 kilometers (2,159 miles).

Mercury's small size means that it has a very weak gravitational pull. This means that Mercury cannot hold onto an atmosphere. Mercury's atmosphere is very thin, and it is composed mostly of oxygen, sodium, and potassium.

## Mercury's Surface

Mercury's surface is covered in craters. These craters were formed by impacts from asteroids and comets. Mercury's surface is also very hot. The daytime temperature on Mercury can reach up to 450 degrees Celsius (842 degrees Fahrenheit). At night, the temperature can drop to -180 degrees Celsius (-292 degrees Fahrenheit).

Mercury's surface is also very dusty. The dust is made up of tiny particles of rock and metal. The dust can be blown around by the wind, and it can make it difficult to see the surface of Mercury.

### **Mercury's Atmosphere**

Mercury's atmosphere is very thin. It is composed mostly of oxygen, sodium, and potassium. The atmosphere is so thin that it cannot protect Mercury from the sun's radiation. This means that the surface of Mercury is constantly being bombarded by solar radiation.

The solar radiation can damage the surface of Mercury. It can also cause the surface of Mercury to heat up. The high temperatures on Mercury can make it difficult for life to survive.

### **Mercury's Magnetic Field**

Mercury does not have a strong magnetic field. This means that Mercury cannot protect itself from the sun's magnetic field. The sun's magnetic field can cause the solar wind to blow away Mercury's atmosphere.

The solar wind is a stream of charged particles that blows from the sun. The solar wind can damage the surface of Mercury. It can also cause the surface of Mercury to heat up.

## **Mercury's Moons**

Mercury does not have any moons. This is because Mercury's gravitational pull is too weak to hold onto a moon.

## **Mercury's Orbit**

Mercury orbits the sun every 88 days. This is the shortest orbital period of any planet in our solar system. Mercury's orbit is also very elliptical. This means that Mercury's distance from the sun varies throughout its orbit.

Mercury's elliptical orbit causes its surface temperature to vary greatly. The daytime temperature on Mercury can reach up to 450 degrees Celsius (842 degrees Fahrenheit). At night, the temperature can drop to -180 degrees Celsius (-292 degrees Fahrenheit).

## **Mercury's Exploration**

Mercury has been visited by several spacecraft. The first spacecraft to visit Mercury was Mariner 10. Mariner 10 flew by Mercury in 1974 and 1975. Mariner 10 took the first close-up images of Mercury's surface.

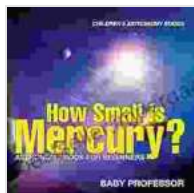
The second spacecraft to visit Mercury was MESSENGER. MESSENGER orbited Mercury from 2011 to 2015. MESSENGER took detailed images of Mercury's surface and studied Mercury's atmosphere and magnetic field.

The third spacecraft to visit Mercury was BepiColombo. BepiColombo arrived at Mercury in 2021. BepiColombo is currently studying Mercury's surface, atmosphere, and magnetic field.

Mercury is a fascinating planet. It is the smallest planet in our solar system and it is very different from Earth. Mercury is a rocky planet with a thin

atmosphere. It is very hot during the day, but very cold at night. Mercury is not a good place for life as we know it.

However, Mercury is a very interesting planet to study. Scientists are learning more about Mercury all the time. The more we learn about Mercury, the more we understand about our solar system.



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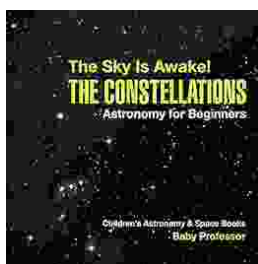
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