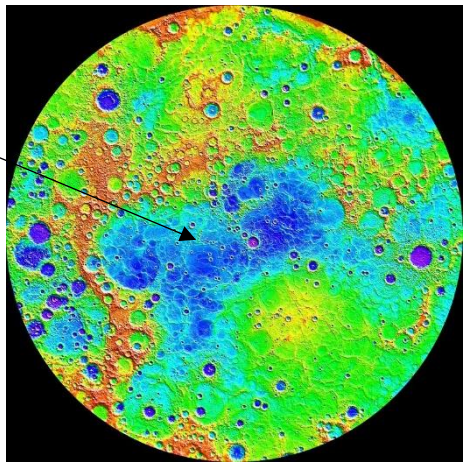
Mercury Fact Sheet

Read through the information on the fact sheet about Mercury on Page 2 or research your own information online (search **Mercury facts for children**).

Draw a picture of Mercury. Try to colour it in a similar colour to Mercury.

Identify 6 things that you've learned about Mercury. Around the outside of your picture highlight these facts or label them as key features of Mercury – eg you could draw details on your picture like the large crater called Caloris Basin and label this or you could write the fact that Mercury heats up to over 400°C and cools to -180°C around the outside.

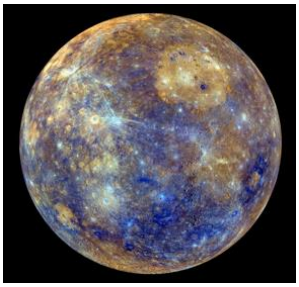
The large crater called Caloris Basin caused by an asteroid hitting Mercury.



Mercury heats up to over 400°C and cools to -180°C.

Think about your presentation and make this as neat as possible. Photograph your fact sheet and upload this to the website.

Mercury Statistics:



- **View on Maps:** google.com/maps/space/mercury
- **Moons:** None
- **Distance from Sun:** 35.98 million miles
- **Orbital period:** 88 days
- **Surface Temperature:** -173 to 427°C
- **Number of Moons:** None

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun but surprisingly, not the hottest. It doesn't have an atmosphere so any heat the planet gets from the Sun quickly escapes back into space.

Temperatures can still get as high as 427°C which is 61 times hotter than the average temperature on Earth! Because there is nothing to hold in the heat, Mercury can also reach temperatures as low as -173°C, almost twice as cold as the lowest temperature ever recorded on Earth.

No atmosphere also means the planet doesn't have a sky! If you could visit Mercury, you would be able to see stars at daytime and the sun would look twice as big.

Because Mercury is the closest planet to the sun, it has a very quick orbit. This means it only takes 88 Earth days to go round the sun which gives Mercury an 88-day year. It rotates quite slowly and means that a day on Mercury lasts for 59 Earth days.

The first probe to reach Mercury was in 1974 and it mapped out the surface to find it was really similar to our moon with lots of craters.

Mercury is a “terrestrial planet” because Mercury has a mostly iron core, a rock mantle, and a solid crust.

Structure and Surface:

When you look at Mercury’s size you will see that it’s only a little bit larger than the Earth’s moon. If you were standing on Mercury’s surface, the sun would look three times as large as it does when you see it from Earth, and the sunlight would be seven times brighter.

The surface of Mercury is covered with a lot of craters that that were caused by collisions with comets and meteoroids. We have named a lot of these craters for famous people, including authors, musicians, and artists, including Dr. Seuss. The crater Caloris Basin is the result of an asteroid around 60 miles wide hitting Mercury; it’s almost 960 miles wide. It’s thought that Mercury may have water ice deep inside the craters at its south and north poles, but only within those areas that are in a constant shadow because the permanent shadow would be cold enough to keep water as ice, even when the rest of the planet is intensely hot.

Mercury’s surface is also covered with cliffs. These can reach up to a mile high and run hundreds of miles across Mercury.

A majority of the surface of Mercury would look like a kind of greyish-brown color to the human eye.