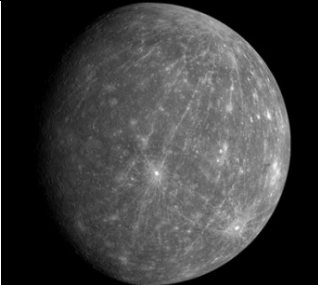


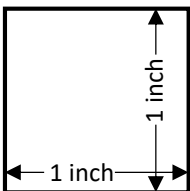


Mercury Versus Earth—A Comparison

Characteristic	Mercury	Earth
image		
1. order from sun	1 st planet (closest to sun)	3 rd planet from the sun
2. average distance from Sun (miles)	36,000,000 miles (about 1/3 earth's distance)	93,000,000 miles (93 million miles)
3. average diameter (miles) 	3032 miles (about 1/3 earth's diameter)	7918 miles
4. shape	sphere	sphere
5. surface gravity at equator (1 gravity = earth's)	0.38 gravity (about 1/3 earth's gravity)	1 gravity
6. day length— 1 spin on axis (Earth days)	58.65 days	1 day
7. temperature at surface (°F) (note: water freezes at 32°F, boils at 212°F)	-279°F (night) to 801°F (day)	-128°F (night, poles) to 131°F (day, equator) [Average 57°F]
8. surface broken into large chunks (plates) which move?	No	Yes
9. layer of gases (atmosphere) surrounds the object?	No	Yes
10. composition of atmosphere—main gases (% by volume)	None (no atmosphere)	78% nitrogen (N ₂), 21% oxygen (O ₂), 0.9% argon (Ar), 0.04% carbon dioxide (CO ₂), 0 to 3% water vapor (H ₂ O _{vapor})
11. weight of atmosphere on every square inch of surface 	0 (no atmosphere)	14.7 pounds (per square inch)
12. water (H ₂ O) exists in liquid form?	No	Yes
13. water (H ₂ O) exists in solid form (ice)?	Very likely—some ice detected in crater at north pole	Yes
14. evidence of life detected?	No	Yes