

## ACTIVITY!

## Inquire &amp; Investigate



## CAN YOU SPOT MERCURY?

Although it's one of the brightest objects in the sky, seeing the closest planet to the sun isn't easy. As seen from Earth, it never strays far from the sun's blinding glare. Many famous astronomers are rumored to have never seen the elusive planet.

- **To see Mercury, you need to catch it at either dawn or dusk at just the right time of year.** Even then, it isn't easy. Use this website to determine when Mercury is visible to you.



 [naked eye planets](#)

- **You'll need a clear view of the horizon.** Gazing from a hilltop or tall building is helpful. Wait until the sun has set or just before it rises.
- **If you choose to use binoculars or a telescope to observe, NEVER LOOK AT THE SUN.** It can permanently damage your eyes. Pointing a telescope or binoculars at the sun can even start a fire. Always be safe!
- **Record your observations during consecutive days.** Here are some questions to think about.
  1. How does Mercury's position change from night to night?
  2. Does Mercury's brightness appear to change?
  3. Once Mercury is no longer visible, how long do you think it will take before it reappears? Will it show up in the morning or evening sky?

To investigate more, ask a friend or family member who lives far away for help. Have them record their observations of Mercury and compare results. Are they different? Why or why not?