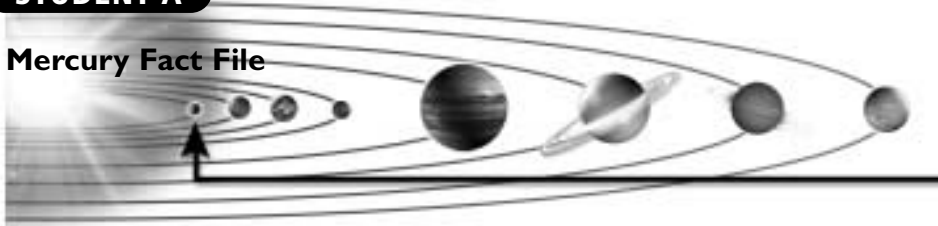


STUDENT A

Mercury Fact File



Compared to the other planets in our Solar System, Mercury is small. Its diameter is 4,878 kilometres, which is 0.06 of the Earth's size. Mercury is 58 million kilometres from the Sun and while this may sound like a long distance it is close if you compare it to other distances in space. This explains why Mercury is so hot. Temperatures on Mercury can vary; the hottest temperature is 427°C while the lowest temperature is a bitterly cold -184°C. The surface of Mercury is barren and it is covered with deep craters, which are so deep that the sunlight never reaches the bottom. Days on Mercury are very long because Mercury spins at a slow speed; it travels at 49 kilometres per second and one day is the same as 58.65 days on Earth. As a result of this, one year on Mercury is 88 Earth days which means that there are fewer than two days in each year!

The first space probe went to Mercury in 1973. The Mariner probe was sent by the USA and it was discovered that nothing could ever live there because there is no water and no atmosphere on the planet. Mercury has no moons and no rings.

incredibly

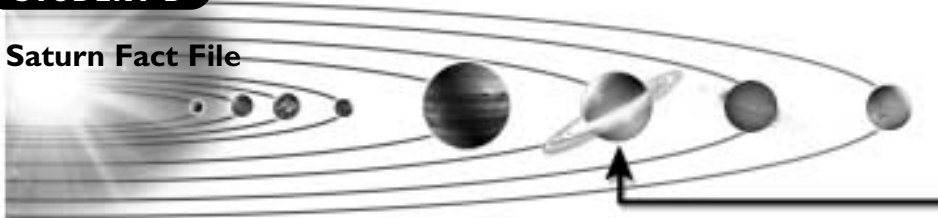
*approximately
incredibly
partly; greatly*

*incredibly
extremely
incredibly
approximately*

possibly

STUDENT B

Saturn Fact File



Saturn – also known as the Ringed Planet – is the second largest planet in our Solar System – only Jupiter is bigger. It is 1,425 kilometres from the Sun and is best known for its rings which are made up of dust and rocks. Saturn is 120,000 kilometres across which means that it is nine times bigger than the Earth. It is made up of gases, mainly hydrogen and helium, and this means that it is light. If you could find an ocean big enough to hold it, Saturn would float. The average temperature on Saturn is an extremely cold -170°C. One day on Saturn lasts for ten and a half Earth hours; this is because Saturn rotates at a fast speed – it moves at 9.64 kilometres every second. On the other hand, because it is far from the Sun it takes Saturn twenty-nine and a half Earth years to complete an orbit.

In 1979 the space probe Pioneer 11 travelled to Saturn. It sent photographs of Saturn back to Earth. Later probes sent information about Saturn's rings and moons back to Earth. About 46 moons have been recorded around Saturn and this is more than most of the other planets.

*approximately
largely*

*completely
incredibly
actually*

*approximately
incredibly*

far

Compare the planets

Activity Text completion

Aim To place adverbs in a text and compare two planets.

Interaction Pairs

Language focus Comparison of adverbs; adverbs of degree

Skills focus Reading, speaking

Preparation Photocopy one worksheet for each pair of students and cut it in half.

Time 20 minutes

Procedure

- 1 Draw an outline of a space rocket on the board and ask for/ elicit related vocabulary, e.g. the names of planets, *orbit*. Write the words that the students suggest within the outline.
- 2 Pre-teach *atmosphere* (n), *barren* (adj), *crater* (n), *orbit* (n), *probe* (n), *rocky* (adj), *to spin* (v).
- 3 Write on the board *Neptune is far from the Sun. As a result of this it takes Neptune 165 years to complete one orbit. (incredibly, approximately)*. Ask the students to decide where the adverbs of degree should go in the sentences (*Neptune is incredibly far from the Sun ... approximately 165 years to complete one orbit*).
- 4 Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Tell group A that they are going to read about Mercury and group B that they are going to read about Saturn, but that a number of words have been taken from the texts.
- 5 Tell the students to work with a partner from the same group and place the adverbs in the correct place. Monitor and give assistance as required.
- 6 When the students have finished, tell them to find a new partner from the other group. Ask the students to tell their new partner about their planet.
- 7 The students then write five sentences comparing the two planets.

Key

Mercury Fact File

Compared to the other ... Mercury is *incredibly* small.

Mercury is *approximately* 58 million kilometres from the Sun ...

... it is *incredibly* close if you compare it ...

This *partly* explains why Mercury is so hot.

Temperatures on Mercury can vary *greatly* ...

The surface of Mercury is *incredibly* barren and it is covered with *extremely* deep craters ...

... Mercury spins at an *incredibly* slow speed; it travels at *approximately* 49 kilometres per second ...

... it was discovered that nothing could ever *possibly* live there ...

Saturn Fact File

It is *approximately* 1,425 kilometres from the Sun ...

... its rings which are *largely* made up of dust and rocks.

It is *completely* made up of gases, ... and this means that it is *incredibly* light.

If you could find an ocean big enough to hold it, Saturn would *actually* float.

... it moves at *approximately* 9.64 kilometres every second.

... because it is *incredibly* far from the Sun ...

... this is *far* more than most of the other planets.