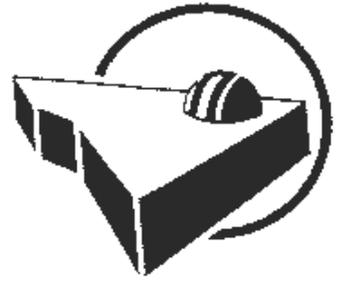




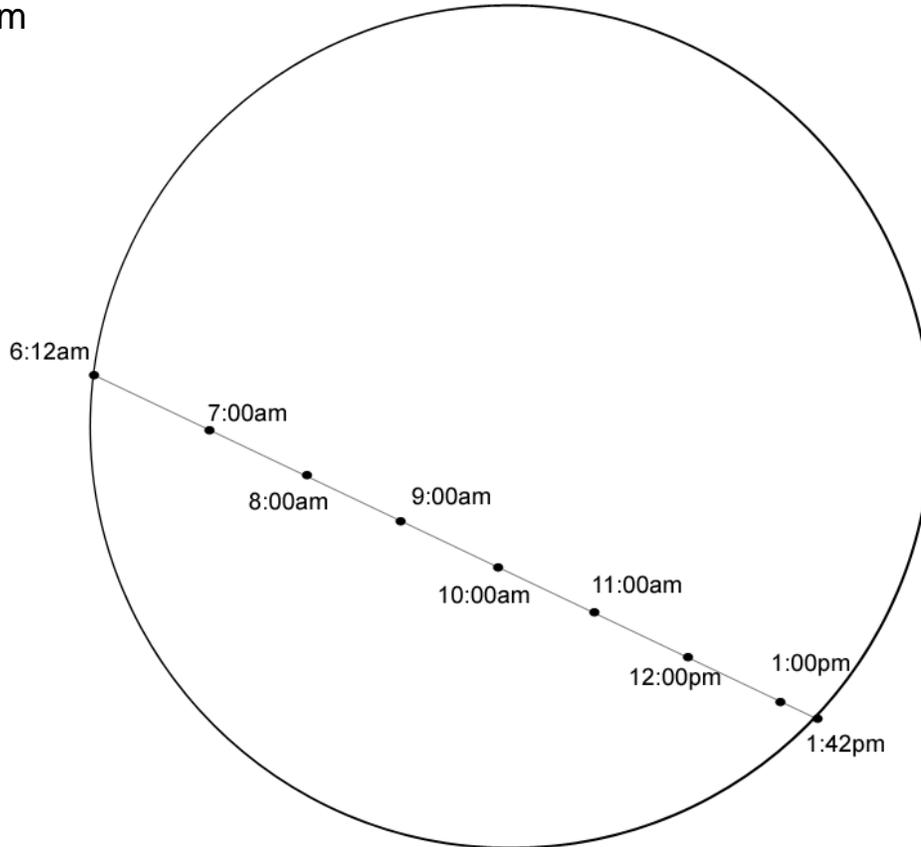
kaowichita.com

2016 Mercury Transit

Safe viewing provided by:
Kansas Astronomical Observers
and
Lake Afton Public Observatory



lakeafton.com



Transit: A planet passing directly between the Earth and our Sun (tiny shadow).

Most of the known extrasolar planets (exoplanets) were found by looking for planetary transits like this one.

Solar Eclipse: The Moon passing between the Earth and Sun, blocking more sunlight (larger shadow).

Sun Facts

- **Never look at the Sun** without the proper equipment.
- **ONLY** self-lit (luminous) object in our solar system.
- Makes up 99.8% of the solar system.
- Has no solid surface, but is a ball of hot gas held together by gravity.
- Different parts rotate at different speeds. (faster at the equator, slower at the poles)
- The Sun's outer atmosphere (corona) reaches beyond Pluto.
- Without the sun's energy there would be little or no life on Earth.
- If the Sun were as tall as a typical door, Earth would be about the size of a nickel.
- Many spacecraft have studied the Sun since 1959.

Mercury Facts

- So close to the Sun, it has to move very fast to keep from being pulled into the Sun. Orbital period is 88 days. (1/4 of an Earth year)
- Sunlight on Mercury is 11 times stronger than on Earth.
- The surface is hot! Rocks are soft enough to "sag" under their own weight.
- So small, if Mercury was somewhere else in our Solar System, it might not be called a "planet".
- About the same size as our Moon, but heavier, due to a metal core similar to Earth.
- If the Sun were as tall as a typical door, Mercury would be about the size of a pea.
- Only 2 spacecraft have photographed Mercury, Mariner 10 (1974-75) and MESSENGER (2008-2015)

Total Solar Eclipse coming to North America on August 21, 2017