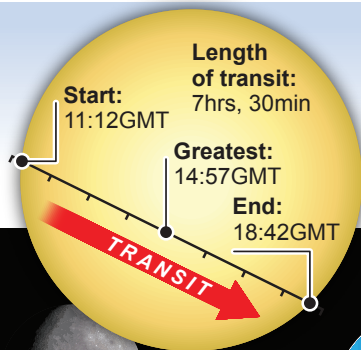


# Skygazers await Transit of Mercury

On May 9, the smallest and innermost planet in our solar system will pass between Earth and the sun, visible through a telescope as a tiny black dot moving across the face of the sun

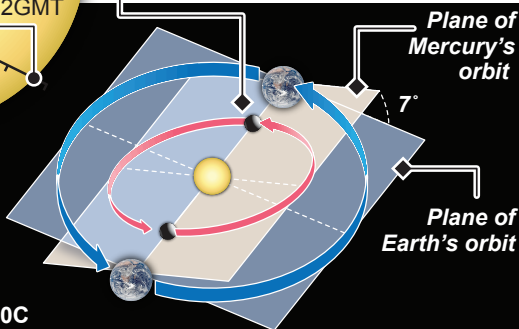


PLANET  
MERCURY

Closest planet to Sun  
Diameter: 4,800km  
Mercurian year: 88 days  
Equator surface temp: 450C

Orbital planes align in May and November each year but as planets travel at different speeds, transit occurs only a dozen times a century

In May, Mercury reaches **aphelion** – furthest point from sun – but proximity to Earth makes planet look larger



Transit  
at sunrise

Full  
transit  
visible

Transit  
at sunset

No transit  
visible



Never look directly at sun with naked eye, binoculars, cameras or telescopes without specialised solar filters