**Mercury Versus Earth—A Comparison**

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| **Characteristic** | **Mercury** | **Earth** |
| **image** | [Black and white image of Mercury.](http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/multimedia/display.cfm?IM_ID=7543) | Earth-Africa |
| **1. order from sun** | 1st planet (closest to sun) | 3rd 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) |
| Image result for image showing diameter of sphere**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 (N2),  21% oxygen (O2),  0.9% argon (Ar),  0.04% carbon dioxide (CO2),  0 to 3% water vapor (H2Ovapor) |
| **11. weight of atmosphere on every square inch of surface**  1 inch  1 inch | 0  (no atmosphere) | 14.7 pounds  (per square inch) |
| **12. water (H2O) exists in liquid form?** | No | Yes |
| **13. water (H2O) exists in solid form (ice)?** | Very likely—some ice detected in crater at north pole | Yes |
| **14. evidence of life detected?** | No | Yes |