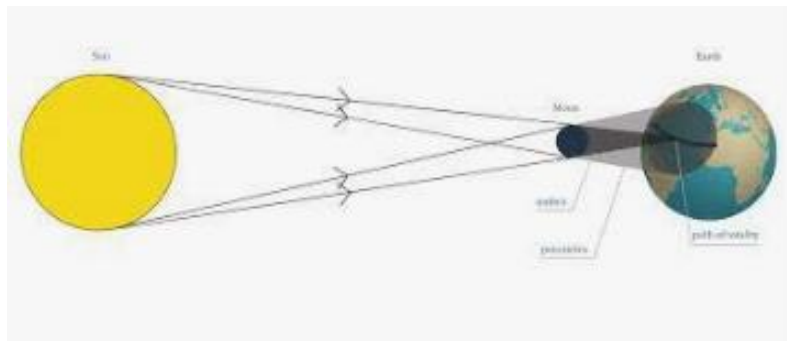


What is an eclipse?

An eclipse is an amazing astronomical event which happens when the shadow of the moon passes between ourselves on Earth and the Sun.

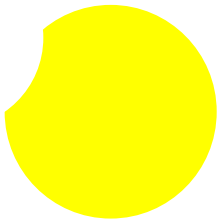
Even though the sun is around 400 times bigger than the moon it is also 400 times further away which, luckily for us, means they both look the same size in the sky enabling a shadow of the moon to occur on Earth when the moon passes in front of the sun.

If the distances and sizes were different we wouldn't get eclipses! It is just complete chance that the moon takes up the same space in the sky as the sun. If there were people on the moon they would also be able to see an 'eclipse of the earth' from time to time!

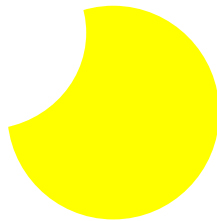


Total vs partial

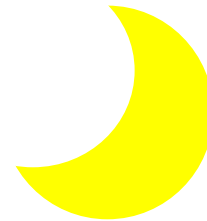
Most eclipses are partial. Total eclipses are much less frequent (making it even more important to try to see one!) In 2022 the partial eclipse in the UK will enable us to view a 'bite' taken out of the sun whereas in Ireland it will be a bit less and in Eastern Europe a bit more.



Ireland



UK



Finland

Total eclipses, when the moon completely covers the sun, are far less common. Book your holidays to USA in 2024 and Spain in 2026 and 2027!

How often do they happen?

There are two to five eclipses on the earth every year but many occur over the sea and areas where people don't live so it's very special to have an eclipse in a populated area.

The eclipse will appear different depending upon how much in line with the sun and moon you are so you may have a small piece cut out of the sun, it could be a sharp crescent or sometimes a total eclipse (USA in 2024 and Spain in 2026 and 2027!)

