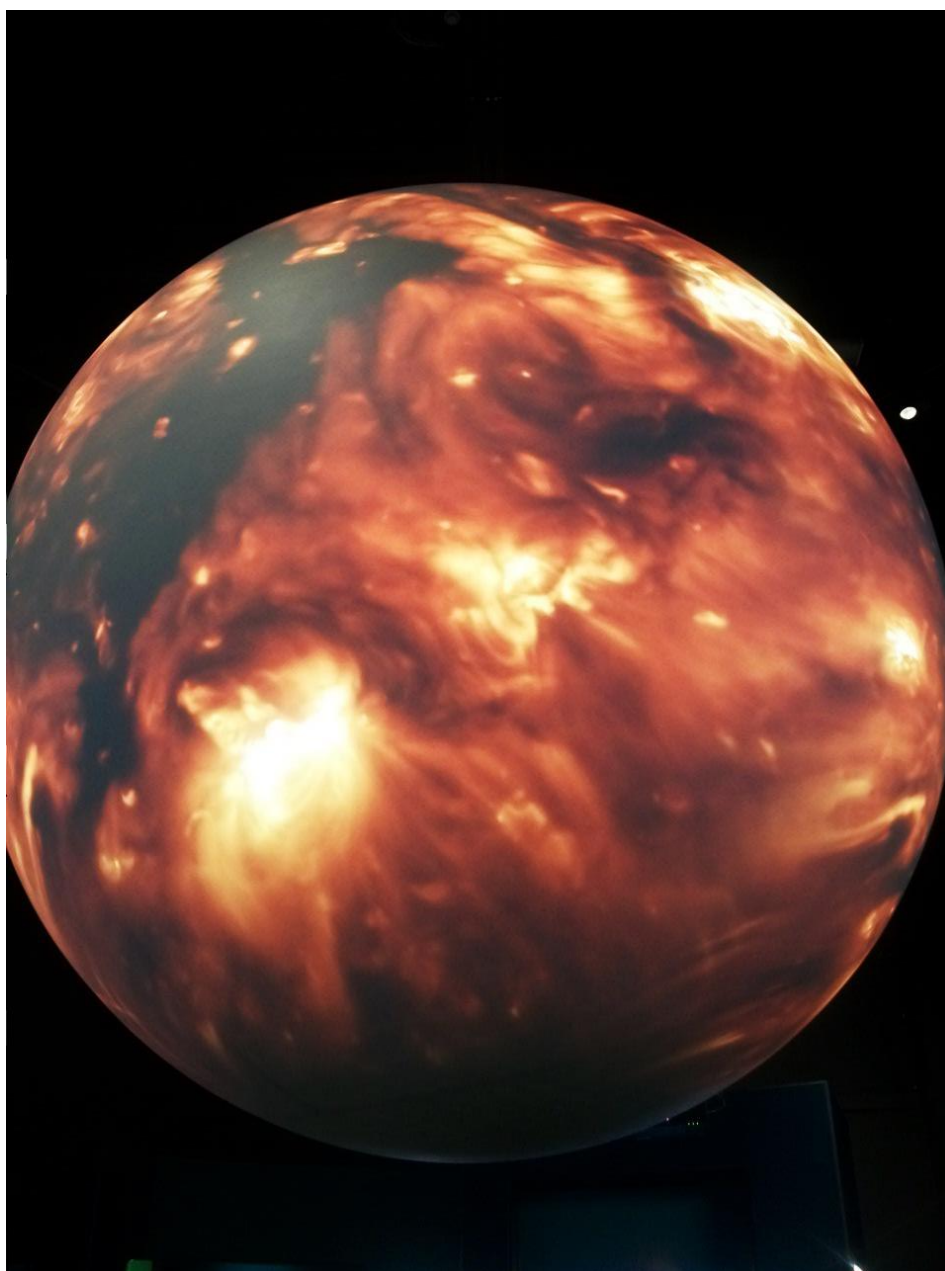


How can you see the sun?

SCIENCE ON A SPHERE



(Type)	Ages	Topic	Time
Science background	3-14	Light	<10 mins
	Skills used Observation - Curiosity		

Overview for adults

Science on a Sphere is a giant sphere which shows a real life projection of the surface of the Sun.

What's the science?

It's really difficult to study the Sun because it's so bright. It's too bright to look at with our eyes and it can damage telescopes if they are pointed directly at it. These images were captured by satellites in space which took pictures of the Sun in ultraviolet light, a type of light that we can't see. The Sun is much dimmer in ultraviolet so we can see all the patterns on its surface. They are caused by plasma (super-hot gas) moving around inside the Sun.

Science in your world

The Sun gives out light that we can't see as well as the light we can. Ultraviolet light is just beyond violet on the colour spectrum and is what causes your skin to burn if you spend too long in the sun. Sunblock absorbs ultraviolet light and stops it from reaching your skin.

Infrared light is just beyond red on the colour spectrum. We can't see it but we can detect it as heat. When you feel the heat of the Sun you're actually feeling the infrared light it is giving out.

Things to think and talk about ...

- Does the Sun look the same all over?
- Which bit of the Sun do you think is the hottest?

Things to investigate ...

- Can you see explosions on the surface of the Sun? What do you think causes them?
- Can you think of some ways the Sun affects you?

Museum links

Early photos used the light of the Sun to create black and white pictures. You can see some of them in the Kodak gallery on the lower ground floor.

Did you know...?

The Sun only appears yellow to our eyes because its light is filtered through the air. If you were an astronaut in space, the Sun would look bright white.