

NEXT-TIME QUESTION



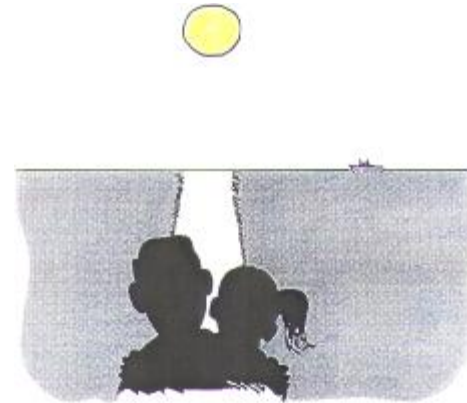
Why does light from the Sun or Moon appear as a column when reflected from a body of water?

How would it appear if the water surface were perfectly smooth?



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How would it appear if the water surface were perfectly smooth?



Answers:

If the water were perfectly smooth, a mirror image of the round Sun or Moon would be seen in the water. If the water were slightly rough, the image would be wavy. If the water were a bit more rough, little glimmers of the Sun or Moon would be seen above and below the main image. This is because the water waves act like an assemblage of small flat mirrors. For rougher waves, there is a greater variety of mirror facets properly tilted to reflect sunlight or moonlight into your eye. The light then appears smeared into a long vertical column.

