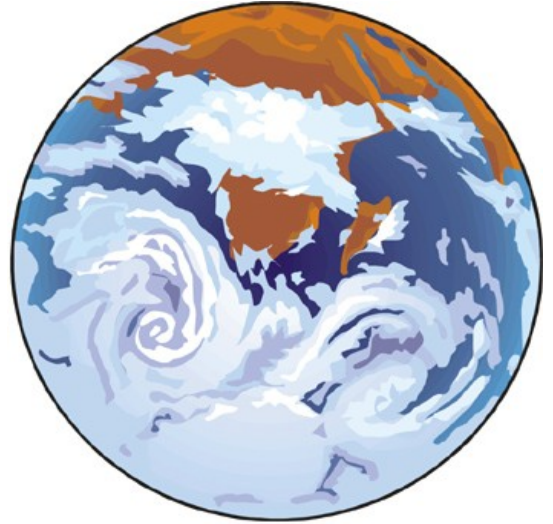


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Earth

by Cynthia Sherwood

Earth is the “just right” planet. It's not too close to the sun and it's not too far away. That means Earth doesn't get too hot or too cold, unlike all the other planets. Because of its comfortable temperatures, Earth is the only place in the entire universe where we know that life exists. That makes Earth very special!



Earth is unique in another way too. Living creatures must have water to survive. Since water covers about seventy percent of Earth's surface, our planet is an ideal place to support life in many different forms. The rest of Earth's surface is made up of seven land masses called *continents*.

Scientists say Earth is about four-and-a-half billion years old. Fossils show microscopic life first appeared about a billion years later. Evidence of the first human beings came much later—only about 200-hundred-thousand years ago. That's many millions of years after the dinosaurs became extinct.

Earth is the fifth largest planet and the third planet from the sun, which is about 93 million miles away. It takes one year for Earth to travel completely around the sun. Earth also spins around like a top, going about a thousand miles an hour. You'd think we'd all need seat belts! Earth rotates around like this once every twenty-four hours, and that's what gives us night and day.

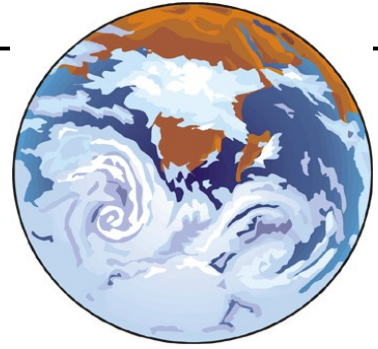
Earth is divided into several layers: the top part is called the *crust*, the part below that is called the *mantle*, and the part in the center is called the *core*. The core is solid and is probably made up of iron. Temperatures at the center of the core may be even hotter than the surface of the sun!

Scientists who study Earth are called *geologists*. Astronauts can also study Earth from space, adding to what we know about our unique and beautiful blue and green planet. Don't you feel lucky to live on the “just right” planet?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Earth

by Cynthia Sherwood



1. Complete the following sentences with information from the article.

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered in \_\_\_\_\_.

Earth is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

Earth is the \_\_\_\_\_ planet from the sun.

Earth is the \_\_\_\_\_ largest planet in our solar system.

Earth is \_\_\_\_\_ miles away from the sun.

2. What causes night and day on Earth?

- a. The rotation of Earth.
- b. Earth orbiting the sun.
- c. The moon moving around Earth.
- d. Wind moving across Earth.

4. Which sentence correctly describes Earth's layers?

- a. The crust is below the mantle.
- b. The mantle is below the core.
- c. The mantle is above the crust.
- d. The mantle is below the crust.

5. Describe the temperature at the center of the Earth.

\_\_\_\_\_

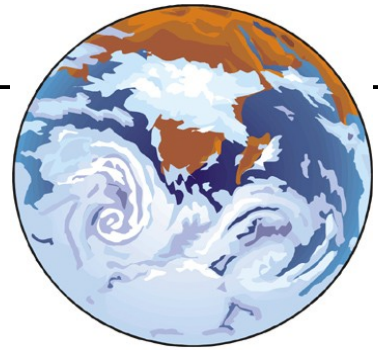
**Challenge:**

People have never walked on any planet besides Earth. (Astronauts have been to the moon, but that's not a planet.) On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph telling why you would or would not like to visit another planet.

# ANSWER KEY

# Earth

by Cynthia Sherwood



1. Complete the following sentences with information from the article.

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered in **water**.

Earth is **4.5 billion** years old.

Earth is the **third** planet from the sun.

Earth is the **fifth** largest planet in our solar system.

Earth is **93 million** miles away from the sun.

2. What causes night and day on Earth? **a**

**a. The rotation of Earth.**

**b.** Earth orbiting the sun.

**c.** The moon moving around Earth.

**d.** Wind moving across Earth.

4. Which sentence correctly describes Earth's layers? **d**

**a.** The crust is below the mantle.

**b.** The mantle is below the core.

**c.** The mantle is above the crust.

**d. The mantle is below the crust.**

5. Describe the temperature at the center of the Earth.

**The Earth's core may be even hotter than the sun.**

## Challenge:

People have never walked on any planet besides Earth. (Astronauts have been to the moon, but that's not a planet.) On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph telling why you would or would not like to visit another planet.