

Image Courtesy of NASA



Earth

Terrestrial Planet

Year = 365 Earth Days

Day = 24 Earth Hours

3rd planet from the Sun

Radius = 3,959 miles

93 million miles from Sun

Gravity = 32.041 ft/s²

Earth is our home planet and is the only place we know of that is inhabited by living things and is the only planet in our solar system that is capable of sustaining life as we know it. One of the most important elements for life, water, covers nearly seventy percent of the surface of our planet and is where life began nearly 3.8 billion years ago.

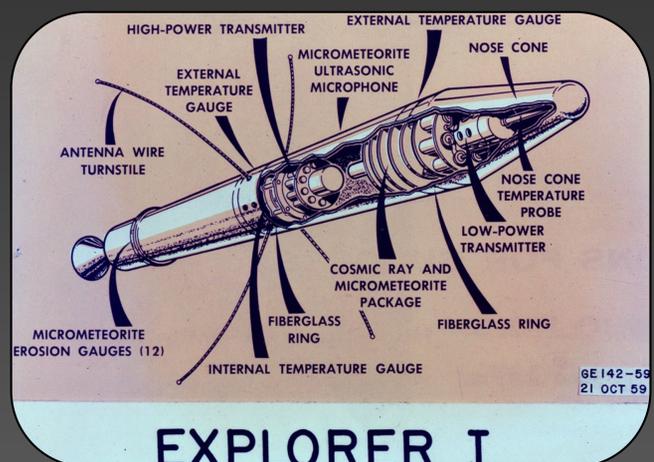
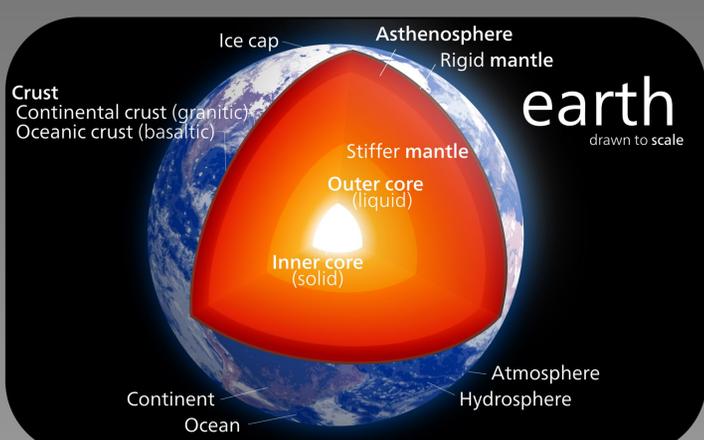


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Unlike the other planets of our solar system we have been able to explore Earth much more closely. Not just in person exploration on Earth's surface, but also from orbit using satellites. NASA satellites and their instruments are able to monitor Earth's systems and how they interact to affect the balance of the planet and the life it contains. The first scientific satellite was launched into orbit in January 1958 and was known as Explorer 1. It broadcast data about the radiation around Earth until May 1958. It completed 58,376 orbits of the planet before tumbling back into Earth's atmosphere and burning up in March 1970.

There are four main layers that comprise Earth. The inner core at the center of Earth is a solid sphere made of iron and nickel just over 1500 miles in diameter. The outer core which surrounds the inner core is made of the same metals but in fluid form about 1,400 miles thick. Next is the mantle, a hot mixture of molten rock which extends another 1,800 miles. The outermost layer, the crust, is thinner and varies from an average of 19 miles on land and 3 miles on the sea floor.



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