



Earth Facts

The place we call home, Earth is the third rock from the sun and the only planet with known life on it – and lots of it too! Earth is the third planet from the Sun and the fifth largest planet in the Solar System with the highest density. It is currently the only known location where life is present.

Key Facts & Summary

- The realization that Earth is a planet, and a planet among many others was established “fairly” recently, in the 17th century – this realization came through by the combined forces of ancient philosophers, mathematicians, and astronomers.
- Plato correctly deduced that the Earth is spherical but this idea would take root and be proven much later.
- The name “Earth” – is at least 1,000 years old, and it is a Germanic word which simply translates to “the ground.” It is unknown who came up with it but it is the only planet that wasn’t named after a Greek or Roman god.
- Earth is estimated to have formed around 4.5 billion years ago – almost one-third of the age of the universe – through accretion from the solar nebula.
- Earth is the third planet from the Sun, at a distance of 1 AU/147 million km/91 million miles.
- It is the fifth-largest planet in the Solar System, being the largest of the terrestrial planets.
- It has an equatorial radius of 6,371 km / 3,958 mi, and a polar radius of 6,356 km / 3,949 mi, meaning it is not completely spherical but rather bulged at the equator due to rotation.
- The Earth has a diameter of 12,742 km / 7,917 mi.
- Earth has a mass of about 6.6 sextillion tons and a volume of about 260 billion cubic miles / 1 trillion cubic kilometres.
- The surface area of Earth is about 197 million square miles / 510 million square kilometres.
- Around 71% of the surface is covered by water and 29% by land.
- The water is 3% fresh and 97% salted. Of that 3% freshwater, over 2% is frozen in ice sheets and glaciers meaning that less than 1% is freshwater found in lakes, rivers, and the underground.
- The continent of Asia covers about 30% of all the land and around 60% of the world’s population.
- The atmosphere of Earth is composed of roughly 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 0.97% argon and carbon dioxide and about 0.04% other gases and water vapor. The mixture of gases is commonly known as air.
- The thickness of the atmosphere is about 60 miles / 96 kilometres. The atmosphere of Earth is divided into 6 layers: troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, thermosphere, exosphere, and ionosphere.

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