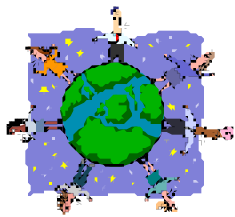




Planet Earth



Earth, our home planet, which is located between an over-heated **Venus** and a glacial **Mars**, is a true paradise. **Earth** has an atmosphere made up of many different gases, mainly nitrogen and oxygen; it is the atmosphere which enables us to breathe. Therefore, because of its atmosphere, **Earth** is the only planet in the solar system known to sustain life. It is the third planet from the Sun and the fifth largest in the solar system.

Did you know that water covers more than half of our planet? **Earth** is the only planet on which water can exist in liquid form. Liquid water is, of course, essential for life, as we know it. Without water all forms of life on **Earth** could not exist. Oceans at least 4 kilometres deep cover nearly 70% of **Earth's** surface. It is the presence and distribution of water vapour from the oceans that allow **Earth** to have stable temperatures, as well as being responsible for much of **Earth's** weather.



It takes one year for the **Earth** to orbit the Sun once. The **Earth** also spins on its axis. It takes 24 hours to complete one full rotation. The **Earth's** axis is tilted a little bit and it is this tilt that is responsible for changes in temperature, which creates seasons.

