

Listening: Overview of Earth

Earth is where we all live. It is our home in the solar system. There is no other place for us to live. Earth isn't just any planet. It's a very special place. It is special because we depend on it for many things. Because of its importance we need to take care of it.

We depend on the Earth for its air, its water and many of its natural resources. Natural resources, such as coal and oil, give us energy. Other natural resources we depend on include forests and soil. Forests provide clean air and wood for building houses. Soil is needed to grow plants and keep them healthy. We need to take care of these resources, and not waste them.

The Earth is a large, rotating sphere, about 4.5 billion years old. The equator, which divides the earth into two hemispheres, is about 40,000 kilometers long. The Earth's diameter is 12,756 kilometers. Its radius is half that, or 6,378 kilometers. The radius is the distance from the Earth's center to its surface. Most of the Earth's surface is covered by water. The rest of the Earth's surface is land.

Just above the Earth's surface is the atmosphere. The atmosphere is a layer of gases about 500 kilometers thick. These gases include oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide. This mixture of gases is the air that we breathe. As we move above the Earth's surface, the air gets thinner. At high altitudes, the air is too thin to breathe. At the edge of the atmosphere is space. There is no air at all in space.

Listening: Water on Earth

Most of the Earth's water is in the oceans. The two largest oceans are the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Unfortunately we can't drink ocean water. This is because ocean water has too much salt. Fortunately, there is also water in lakes and rivers. This water isn't salty, so we can drink it. Only about 2 percent of the world's water is fresh water. Without fresh drinking water, we can't live. A

person can't live for more than a few days without water.

Rivers are important. Most rivers begin in mountains and end in the oceans. The water flows from high ground to low ground. At first rivers are small, and are called creeks or streams. As water enters from other streams, a river grows.

Some rivers become very large and long. The longest river in the world is the Nile River, in Africa. It's almost 6500 kilometers long. As for water volume, the Amazon is the largest river. The volume of water flowing through it per second is more than in any other river.

Another use of rivers is for energy. The energy of falling water is used to produce electricity. This use of water supplies over 20 percent of the world's electricity. Rivers are also important for agriculture. Without water, farmers cannot grow food. And of course rivers can be used for transportation. River boats are used to carry things to inland cities or lakes.

Vocabulary: Things We Enjoy Doing

This man goes running five days a week if the weather is good. On the weekends he runs 10 kilometers unless the weather is bad. This woman is really enjoys reading, especially works of fiction. She has read hundreds of books. This young couple enjoys watching old movies such as Titanic. They both cried when it sank and many people went down with the ship. These young boys enjoy playing sports on the weekend. Sometimes they play basketball and sometimes they play football. This young man eats too many sweets, so he is overweight. He needs to eat fewer sweets and exercise more.

Vocabulary: Continents

Here are 6 of the Earth's 7 continents. Asia is the largest continent both in land and in population. Asia covers 30 percent of the Earth's land area. Africa is the second largest continent. Of all the continents, Africa has the youngest population. Europe is to the west of Asia, and is the second smallest

continent. Europe is the birthplace of classical music and some of the world's greatest art and literature. North and South America are bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean. The first human beings to live in the Americas came from Asia more than 15000 years ago. Australia is the world's smallest continent. Australia is surrounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans.