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AMERICAN
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dictionary

of the
English
Language



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earth  (úrth)

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n.

1.

a. The land surface of the world.

b. The softer, friable part of land; soil, especially productive soil.

2. often **Earth** The third planet from the sun, having a sidereal period of revolution about the sun of 365.26 days at a mean distance of approximately 149.6 million kilometers (92.96 million miles), a sidereal rotation period of 23 hours 56.07 minutes, an average radius of 6,378.1 kilometers (3,963 miles), and a mass of approximately 5.9736×10^{24} kilograms (1.3169×10^{25} pounds).

3. The realm of mortal existence; the temporal world.

4. The human inhabitants of the world: *The earth received the news with joy.*

5.

a. Worldly affairs and pursuits.

b. Everyday life; reality: *was brought back to earth from his daydreams of wealth and fame.*

6. The substance of the human body; clay.

7. The lair of a burrowing animal.

8. *Chiefly British* The ground of an electrical circuit.

9. *Chemistry* Any of several metallic oxides, such as alumina or zirconia, that are difficult to reduce and were formerly regarded as elements.

v. **earthed**, **earth·ing**, **earths**

v.tr.

1. To cover or heap (plants) with soil for protection.

2. To chase (an animal) into an underground hiding place.

v.intr.

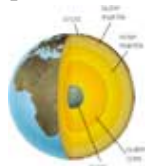
To burrow or hide in the ground. Used of a hunted animal.

Idiom:

on earth

Among all the possibilities: *Why on earth did you put on that outfit?*

[Middle English *the*, from Old English *eorthe*; see *er-*² [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]



(click for a larger image)

earth

cutaway of the earth

Indo-European & Semitic Roots Appendices

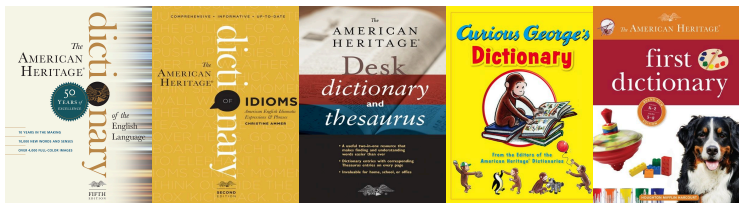
Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

Indo-European Roots

Semitic Roots

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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