

Earth's Layers

Read the information below to learn about Earth's solid and atmospheric layers. When you're done, see if you can label each layer in the illustration below.

At the center of the Earth lies the Earth's core. It consists of two layers - the **inner core** and the **outer core**. The inner core is an extremely dense sphere believed to contain large amounts of Earth's heaviest elements like iron and nickel. It is estimated to be 1,520 miles in diameter and over 9,000 degrees Fahrenheit! The **mantle** makes up almost 70% of the Earth's total mass. It is separated from the liquid outer core by the thin **'D' layer**. All of these layers together are nearly 8,000 miles in diameter. They all rest below the **crust** of the Earth, which is only 6 miles thick and represents the paper thin shell covering the rest of the planet.

The **troposphere** is the lowest layer of the Earth's atmosphere. This is where the majority of clouds and weather exist. Just above troposphere is the **stratosphere** where airplanes comfortably cruise. Beyond the stratosphere are the **mesosphere**, then the **thermosphere**, and finally the **exosphere**, which begins about 400 miles above the surface of the Earth. Beyond the exosphere is "outer space."

Distances not drawn to scale

