

What Is Inside the Earth?

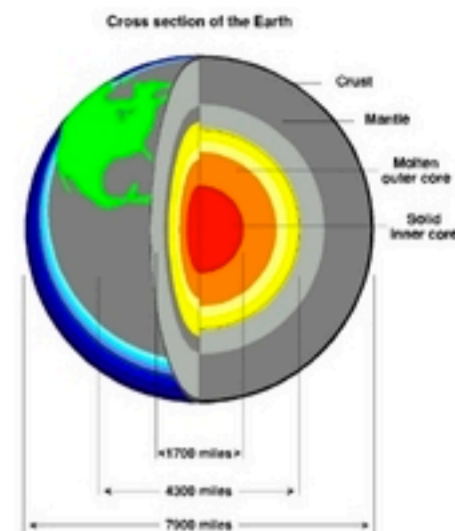
By Cindy Grigg



surface	layers	move	between
press	handful	center	people
boat	pressing	same	crust
large	skin	layer	past

Directions: Fill in each blank with the word that best completes the reading comprehension.

Long ago, people used to think the Earth was flat. They believed if they sailed a boat far out into the ocean, the (1) _____ would fall off the Earth! Now (2) _____ know that this is not true. We know the Earth is not flat. It is shaped like a ball. The Earth only looks flat to us because it is so (3) _____. We can only see a small part of the Earth's surface when we are standing on it. Have you ever wondered what the Earth is like underneath the surface?



Have you ever seen a peach that has been cut in half? If we could see inside the Earth, it would look very much like a peach. The Earth has four (4) _____. The outer layer of the Earth is called the **crust**. The crust of the Earth is like the skin of a peach. The skin on the peach is very thin. It is only a small part of the peach. The crust of the Earth is also very thin. It is only a small part of the Earth. The crust is the Earth's thinnest layer.

The crust is made up of rocks and soil. The land you walk on and the land on the bottom of the ocean make up the Earth's (5) _____. The crust under land is thicker. The crust under the ocean is thinner. The crust is made up of many large pieces called plates. When two plates push toward each other, mountains can form on the Earth's crust.

Under the (6) _____ of the peach is the sweet fruit that is good to eat. The layer of the Earth under the crust is called the **mantle**. It is mostly made of rock. Some of the rock inside the mantle is partly melted. This is the thickest layer of the Earth.

When a volcano erupts, some of the hot melted (or molten) rock comes out. Inside the Earth, the hot melted rock is called magma. When it comes out of a volcano and reaches the Earth's (7) _____, it is called lava. The plates of the Earth's crust float upon the mantle. When a plate is pushed below another plate, a volcano can form. The plates only (8) _____ or float a few centimeters each year.

After you get down (9) _____ the fruit, you come to the hard peach pit. This part of the peach is like the Earth's outer core. If an adult takes a sharp knife and carefully pries on the peach pit, it will open up. You will see another part inside the pit. This seed inside the pit is like the Earth's inner core.

The Earth's **outer core**, (10) _____ the mantle and the inner core, is mostly hot liquid metal. It is liquid because the core is so hot. The Earth's **inner core** is made of solid iron and nickel. The inner core is the hottest (11) _____. The temperature of the core is almost as hot as the surface of the sun! It is solid because of the weight of the Earth (12) _____ down on it. In the (13) _____ way, when you (14) _____ down on a (15) _____ of snow it becomes a solid ball of hard ice. Pressure makes it more solid.

No one has seen inside the Earth's (16) _____. The Earth's mantle and core are too far down to reach. How do scientists know what it is like? They study the inside of the Earth from the outside. Movements of the Earth's crust give information about the inside of the Earth. Scientists also use tools to find out about the inside of the Earth.