

Earth - An Amazing Planet!

Our planet is an amazing place. The Earth orbits the Sun and it takes one year to go around it completely. The Earth also rotates, or spins, on its axis. It takes 24 hours to rotate once. The Earth's axis is tilted. This tilt is responsible for us having seasons. Otherwise, the temperature would be the same all year long. 70% of the Earth's surface is covered by water. The remaining 30% is covered by mountains, volcanoes, deserts, plains, and valleys.



Earth is the third closest planet to the Sun. It has an atmosphere made up of mainly nitrogen (80%) and oxygen. Earth is the only planet whose English name does not come from Greek or Roman mythology. The name derives from Old English and Germanic. The ozone layer surrounds the Earth and acts like a natural filter preventing most of the sun's ultraviolet rays from reaching the Earth.

Our Earth is also a violent place. Volcanoes can be seen in many countries. The largest is in the Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, America. Its initial eruption 2 million years ago was 2,500 times more powerful than the recent Mt. St. Helens eruption and was, perhaps, the most violent volcanic eruption in Earth's history. Earthquakes occur along plate boundaries. As the plates move, stress builds up and when released, the plates move and an earthquake occurs. One of these faults, the San Andreas Fault is considered the main boundary between the Pacific and North American Plates.

Temperatures on Earth vary. The hottest place is El Azizia in Africa. Temperatures there can reach a blistering 136° Fahrenheit, 57.8° Centigrade. Despite this, Earth has plenty of oceans and seas. The smallest ocean is the Arctic Ocean, about 10 times smaller than the Pacific Ocean. The seas are also warmed by El Nino, an abnormal warming of surface ocean waters in the eastern tropical Pacific.

There are seven continents - Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Australia and Antarctica. On land there are many sizes of countries. The Vatican City, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, is the smallest. The word Timbuktu is widely used to describe a place extremely far away, but in reality it is a city in Mali, West Africa.

In the UK, we have a wide variety of animal and plant life, although our weather is not perfect. The UK has a population of over 60 million people and recently it has been reconised that we, along with the rest of the world, should do what we can to reduce pollution and waste. Carbon Footprints, a measure of the power a household can use, are being used to measure the impact humans have on the environment. It has been proved that recycling can save a lot of energy. Recycling one glass bottle can power a colour TV for 20 minutes, for example. However, some countries refuse to acknowledge the problem. China causes the most polution of all, releasing large amounts of sulphur dioxide and soot into the atmosphere on a daily basis.

G8 Leaders for France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK, US, Canada and Russia met at the 2007 summit to discuss issues about global climate change and the need to reduce pollution by all nations. Other issues were discused too, including support for peace in the Middle East, countering global terrorism and the proliferation of weapons.

Jan Long, 2007

True / False

Look at the article and work out whether these sentences are true or false.

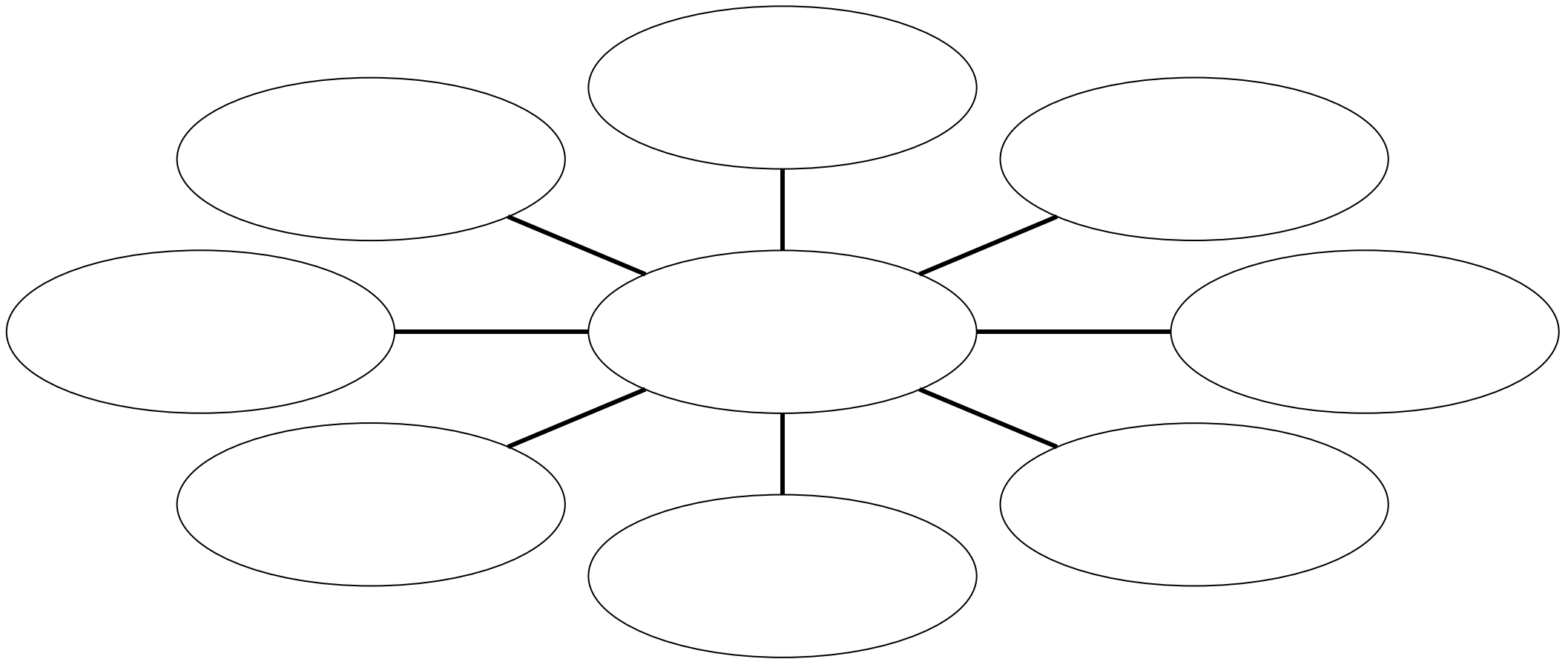
- | | |
|--|-------|
| (a) Earth's atmosphere is mostly made up of oxygen. | T / F |
| (b) China is the most polluted place on the planet. | T / F |
| (c) Vatican City is the smallest country. | T / F |
| (d) Carbon footprints are used to measure how the environment is affected by humans. | T / F |
| (e) G8 Leaders from 8 countries attended this year's summit. | T / F |
| (f) Timbuktu doesn't really exist as a place. | T / F |
| (g) The Sun is the third closest planet to the Earth. | T / F |
| (h) The tilt of the Earth gives us the seasons. | T / F |

Earth - An Amazing Planet! Reading and writing tasks

1. What do you think is the most amazing thing about our Earth?
Give reasons for your answer.
2. Do you think the author thinks the Earth is an amazing place to live? Why?
Use quotes to support your arguments.
3. What are we doing that is damaging the Earth?
Give reasons for your answer.
4. What can we do to help reduce pollution and waste at home?
Choose at least 2 examples and discuss the pros and cons.
5. What are large countries doing about tackling the problem? Give your opinion
on how successful they have been and what more you think they need to do.
6. Why do you think that all countries are not trying to keep the Earth clean?
Give reasons for your answer.
7. What can we do to encourage them to do something about it?
Explain your answer.
8. Summarise the paragraph on the UK in your own words.
9. There are 6 spelling errors in the text. Find them and write the correct spellings.

Extended writing task

10. Write a piece of extended writing on why you think the Earth is a great planet to live on and why we should look after it.
You can use the internet or books to research material before you begin to write.
Make sure you include a bibliography and reference all your source material.



Step 1 - Plan your writing here

Step 2 - Write your rough copy, notes or draft here.

Title

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Paragraph 1 - The Introduction. Introduce your topic and tell your audience what you are going to talk about.

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Paragraph 2 - Talk about the first thing you want to say. Finish this paragraph with a **linking sentence** to the next topic in Paragraph 3.

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Paragraph 3 - Talk about the next thing you want to say. Finish this paragraph with a **linking sentence** to the next topic in Paragraph 4.

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Paragraph 4 - Talk about the next thing you want to say. Finish this paragraph with a **linking sentence** to your summary or conclusion in Paragraph 5.

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Paragraph 5 - Your conclusion. Bring together your thoughts, ideas and opinions.

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Step 3 – Editing and proof reading

- a) Does your writing make sense?
- b) Do the ideas flow from one paragraph to the other?
- c) If not - how can you alter what you have written, so that they do?
- d) Proof read your work for spelling, grammar and punctuation. Use a dictionary / thesaurus if you need to.
- e) Have you included a bibliography and referenced all your source material? Are your quotes referenced properly?
- f) If all these things are ok - then you can make a neat copy or word process it.

Well Done!

What do you think you have learned from this exercise?

Answers: Earth – An Amazing Planet!

Our planet is an amazing place. The Earth orbits the Sun and it takes one year to go around it completely. The Earth also rotates, or spins, on its axis. It takes 24 hours to rotate once. The Earth's axis is tilted. This tilt is **responsible (responsible)** for us having seasons. Otherwise, the temperature would be the same all year long. 70% of the Earth's surface is covered by water. The remaining 30% is covered by mountains, volcanoes, deserts, plains, and valleys.

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***Note that volcanoes can also be spelt volcanos.**

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