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Abstract: This article discusses the inner surface of the planet Earth. There are different parts to the Earth. At the center of the Earth is a huge metal ball called the inner core. Around the center of the Earth flows a hot, liquid layer of iron and nickel. The Earth's surface is covered by crust.
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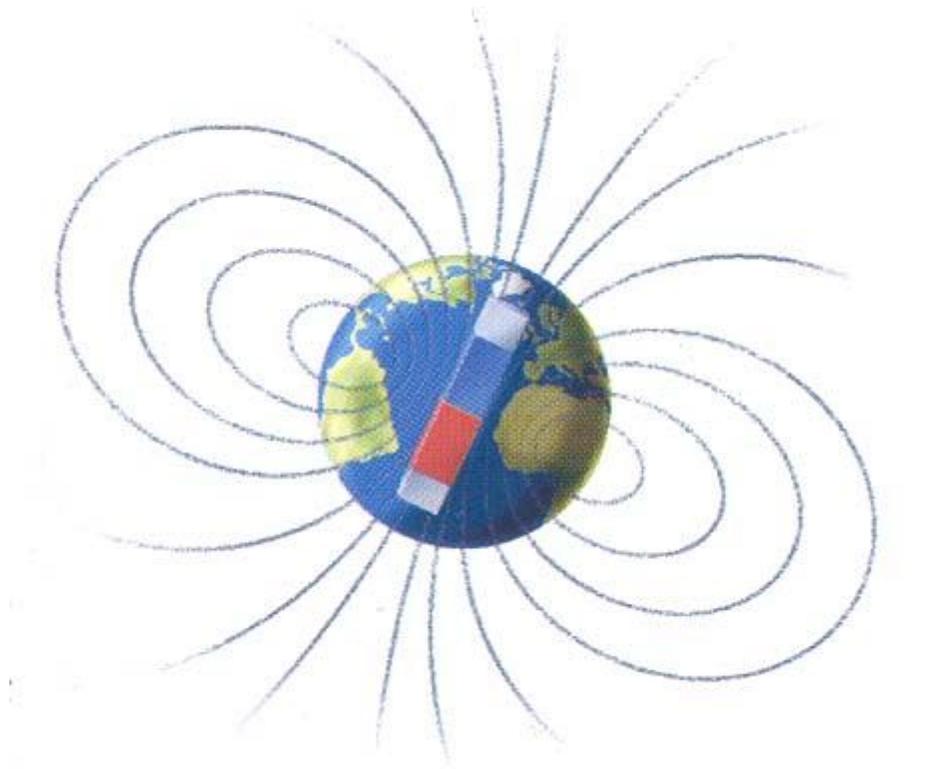
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Inside the Earth.

- **10 There are different parts to the Earth.** There is a thin, rocky crust, a solid middle called the mantle, and a center called the core. The outer part of the core is liquid but the inner core is made of solid metal.
- **11 At the center of the Earth is a huge metal ball called the inner core.** It is 1,500mi (2,500km) wide and is made mainly from iron, with some nickel. The ball has an incredible temperature of 10,800 Fahrenheit (6,000 Celsius) -- hot enough to make the metals melt. They stay solid because other parts of the Earth push down heavily on them.
- **12 Around the center of the Earth flows a hot, liquid layer of iron and nickel.** This layer is the outer core and is about 1,300mi (2,200km) thick. As the Earth spins, the metal ball and liquid layer move at different speeds.
- **13 The largest part of Earth is a layer called the mantle, which is 1,750mi (2,900km) thick.** It lies between the core and the crust. Near the crust, the mantle is made of slow-moving rock. When you squeeze an open tube of toothpaste, the toothpaste moves a little like the rocks in the upper mantle.
- **14 The Earth's surface is covered by crust.** Land is made of continental crust between 12 and 40mi (20 and 70km) thick. Most of this is made from a rock called granite. The ocean bed is made of oceanic crust about 5mi (8km) thick. It is made mainly from a rock called basalt.
- **15 The crust is divided into huge glabs of rock called plates.** Most plates have land and seas on top of them but some, like the Pacific Plate, are mostly covered by water. The large areas of land on the plates are called continents. There are seven continents -- Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Oceania, and Antarctica.
- **16 Very, very slowly, the continents are moving.** Slow-flowing mantle under the crust the plates across the Earth's surface. As the plates move, so do the continents. In some places, the plates push into each other. In others, they move apart. North America is moving about 1 in (2.5cm) away from Europe every year!



If the Earth could be cut open, this is what you would see inside. It has layers inside it like an onion.

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By Peter Riley

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