

# Etymology of the word "Earth"

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In general English usage, the name **Earth** can be capitalized or spelled in lowercase interchangeably, either when used absolutely or prefixed with "the" (i.e. "Earth", "the Earth", "earth" or "the earth"). Many deliberately spell the name of the planet with a capital, both as "Earth" or "the Earth". This is to distinguish it as a proper noun, distinct from the senses of the term as a count noun or verb (e.g. referring to soil, the ground, earthing in the electrical sense, etc.). Oxford spelling recognizes the lowercase form as the most common, with the capitalized form as a variant of it. Another convention that is very common is to spell the name with a capital when occurring absolutely (e.g. Earth's atmosphere) and lowercase when preceded by "the" (e.g. the atmosphere of the earth). The term almost exclusively exists in lowercase when appearing in common phrases, even without "the" preceding it (e.g. it does not cost the earth; what on earth are you doing?).<sup>[1]</sup>

Terms that refer to the Earth can use the Latin root *terr-*, as in terraform and terrestrial. An alternative Latin root is *tellur-*, which is used in words such as tellurian and tellurium. Such terms derive from Latin *terra* and *tellus*, which refer variously to the world, the element earth, the earth goddess and so forth.<sup>[1]</sup> Scientific terms such as geography, geocentric, and geothermal use the Greek prefix *geo-* (𐀀𐀃𐀆𐀃-, *gaiō-*), from *gē* (again meaning "earth").<sup>[1]</sup> Astronauts refer to the Earth as "Terra Firma".<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The English word "earth" has cognates in many modern and ancient languages. Examples in modern tongues include *aarde* in Afrikaans and Dutch, and *Erde* in German. The root has cognates in extinct languages such as *ertha* in Old Saxon and *ert* (meaning "ground") in Middle Irish, derived from the Old English *eorðe*. All of these words derive from the Proto-Indo-European base *\*er-*.

Several Semitic languages have words for "earth" similar to those in Indo-European languages. Arabic has *ard*; Akkadian, *irtsitu*; Aramaic, *araa*; Phoenician, *erets* (which appears in the Mesha Stele); and Hebrew, אֶרֶץ (*arets*, or *erets* when not preceded by a definite article, or when followed by a noun modifier). The etymological connection between the words in Indo-European and Semitic languages are uncertain, though, and may simply be coincidence.

The standard name for people from Earth is Human, although Terran, Earthling, Tellurian, Gaian, and Earther are alternate names that have been used in science fiction. In Matt Groening's *Futurama*, humans are comically referred to as "Earthicans."

Words for Earth in other languages include: *Terre* (French), *Erde* (German), *Bhumi* (Sanskrit), *Bhumi*, *Ulagam* (Tamil), *Maa* (Finnish and Estonian), *Pământ* (Romanian), *Föld* (Hungarian), *Ziemia* (Polish), *Zemlja* (Ukrainian, Slovenian, Russian, and Serbian), *Zemya* **Земля** (Bulgarian), *Tierra* (Spanish), *Terra* (Italian), 地球 (*Dìqiú* [ Pinyin [Mandarin pronunciation]) (Characters used in Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, with Japanese pronunciation as "chikyuu"), 지구 (*Jigu* (Korean), *Bumi* (Malay), *Jorden* (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish), *Jørðin* or *jørðin* (Faroese), ᐃᐃᐅ

אָרץ (Hebrew), *Bhoomi* (Telugu), *Gi*, *Choma* (Greek), *Dunia* (Swahili), *Âlem*, *Diinya* World الأرض (Arabic), ardh' Earth in (Arabic) *Dinê* (Kurdish), *Ergir* Էրկիր (Armenian), *Jehun*, *Zamin* (Persian), *Acun*, *Yeryüzü*, *Yerküre* (Turkish).<sup>[2]</sup>, ꞑꞑꞑ(pron. jir, Tatar) and ꞑꞑꞑ(pron. zher, Qazaq).

## See also

- Nostratic languages

## References

- ↑ ***a b c*** Pearsall, J. (ed.) (1998). *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* (First edition ed.). Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-861263-X.
- ↑ Arnett, Bill (January 28, 2007). "Names of the Planets" (http://web.archive.org/web/20070208090036/http://www.seds.org/nineplanets/nineplanets/days.html) . Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS). Archived from the original (http://www.seds.org/nineplanets/nineplanets/days.html) on 2007-02-08. http://web.archive.org/web/20070208090036/http://www.seds.org/nineplanets/nineplanets/days.html. Retrieved 2007-03-02.

## External links

- Etymology: Earth - WordReference Forums (http://forum.wordreference.com/showthread.php?t=490936)
- Dinar Qurbanof’s blog ... Etymology of “earth” and “great groups of words” (http://qdb.wp.kukmara.ru/2009/07/07/etymology-of-earth-and-great-groups-of-words/)
- Earth - Word Roots Medical Etymology (http://www.consultsos.com/pandora/earth.htm)

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