PAPER WORLD

PLANET EARTH

Take a look inside Planet Earth – with 30 flaps to lift!

illustrated by BOMBOLAND

OUR PLANET

Our planet's green-blue surface is a patchwork of continents and oceans. Together they form Earth's outer layer – a thin, rocky shell called the crust. If you were to lift this off, you would find even more layers beneath it, leading right down to the centre of the Earth.

Just under the crust is a very thick layer called the mantle. Here, the rock is so hot that it almost melts and can flow a bit like a liquid. Sometimes it even bursts through the crust at volcanoes. Beneath the mantle is the outer core, made of hot molten iron. And beneath that, you finally reach Earth's centre – its inner core. This ball of iron is hotter than the surface of the Sun (6,000°C), but is under so much pressure that it is completely solid!

Atmosphere
The atmosphere is a blanket of gases around Earth. It contains the air we breathe, keeps us warm and protects us from the Sun's harmful rays.

Mid-oceanic ridge
The mid-oceanic ridge running down the Atlantic Ocean is a line of mountains, formed by movements inside Earth's crust.

Blue planet
About two-thirds of Earth is covered in water. Beneath the waves, the seafloor is scattered with features like mountains and volcanoes.

Earth's crust
Continental crust (the part where the land is) can be up to 70km thick. But oceanic (underwater) crust may be just 7km thick – that's less than the height of Mt Everest.

A missing piece
In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, a huge chunk of Earth's crust is missing. The mantle here is completely exposed!

TECTONIC PLATES

Earth's outer layer is split into big slabs called tectonic plates, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. They are constantly moving – very, very slowly – passing by or bumping into each other at places called boundaries.

There are three main types of plate boundary. Divergent boundaries occur where plates move away from each other: they create wide stretches known as mid-oceanic ridges underwater, or as rift valleys on land. Convergent boundaries are where plates move towards each other: they make mountain ranges as the plates buckle together, or form deep sea trenches underwater. Transform boundaries are where plates slide past each other. These passing plates sometimes 'snag' and trigger huge earthquakes!