How much water is on Earth?

Earth is special because it has so much water.

Just 3.5% of the water on Earth is fresh water we can drink. And most of that fresh water, 68%, is trapped in ice and glaciers.

It's in the ground, forms big oceans, and it's in our atmosphere.

Almost all of it — 96.5% — is salt water. Salt water has different kinds of salt in it, but it mostly has sodium chloride; the same salt we add to our food.

A third of the fresh water is in the ground. We call it groundwater. The last 2% of fresh water is in the rivers, lakes, and streams.

A very small amount is in our atmosphere, where it exists as water vapor. That's what clouds are made of.

Water covers 71% of Earth's surface.

If you took all the water on Earth and put it together it would be a ball 860 miles wide.

That's a lot of water!

For more information, visit spaceplace.nasa.gov/water