It's pretty mind-bending trying to think about where the universe is. You'd think that wherever it is, that has to be somewhere too.

Some scientists believe that everything in the universe was once jammed together in one spot. They believe that it exploded apart in a "big bang". This is called the Big Bang theory. Stuff was thrown in all directions and the universe was created. That was about 20 billion years ago.

Scientists believe Earth was born about 4.6 billion years ago when gas and dust from the explosion started to clump together in our solar system.

The Earth was a hot and sloppy place for hundreds of millions of years. Even when the surface began to cool and form a crust, hot chunks would rain down from space and melt it again. Eventually, most of the pieces floating about in space became part of our sun, the nine planets or their moons.

Molten iron and nickel oozed down to the centre of the sloppy ball and became the Earth's core. The core is a long way down beneath the Earth's surface—6,375 km (3,960 miles) beneath your feet.

Although the temperature at the core is 5,000°C (9,000°F), this ball of metal is solid. Around it is an outer core of molten iron and nickel. The outer core is about 1,932 km (1,200 miles) thick.

Between the outer core and the crust, there is 40 km (25 miles) of solid rock. This is the ground we live on and it is called the mantle.

A star is created by an explosion. Scientists believe the universe was created by an even bigger bang. As a result of the "big bang" explosion, the universe is still expanding today.

1. The Earth began as gases.
2. The gases became solid minerals.
3. Heavy metals such as iron and nickel sank to the Earth's middle.
4. The Earth today.