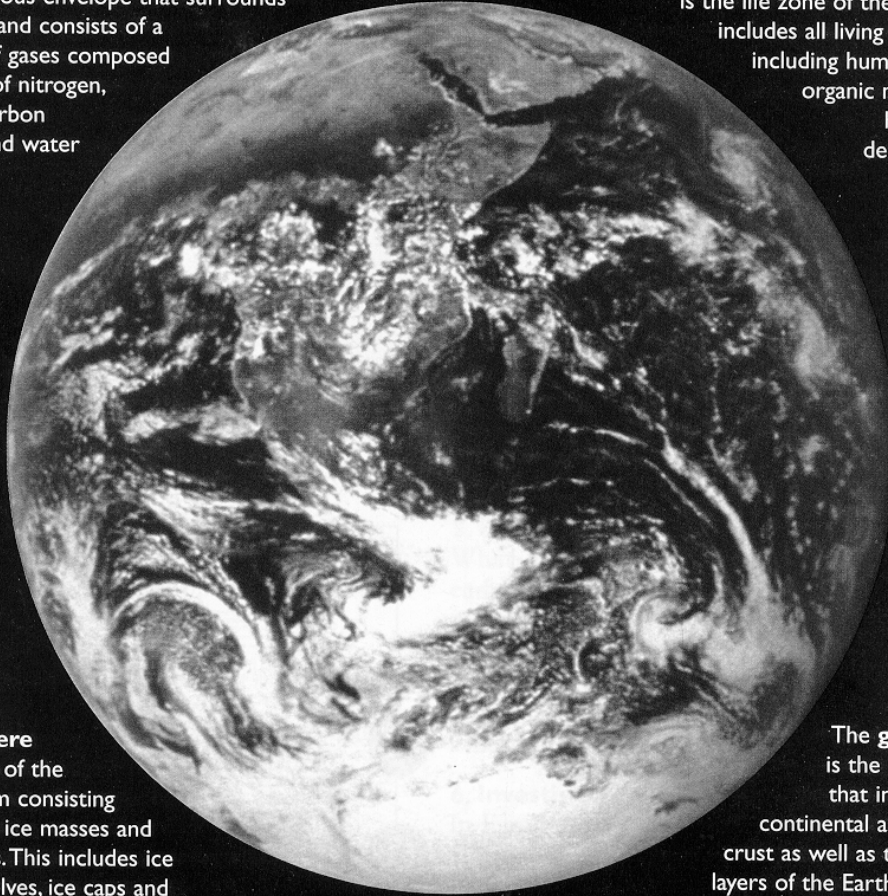


# EARTH SYSTEMS

The **atmosphere** is the gaseous envelope that surrounds the Earth and consists of a mixture of gases composed primarily of nitrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and water vapor.

The **biosphere** is the life zone of the Earth and includes all living organisms, including humans, and all organic matter that has not yet decomposed.



The **cryosphere** is the portion of the climatic system consisting of the world's ice masses and snow deposits. This includes ice sheets, ice shelves, ice caps and glaciers, sea ice, seasonal snow cover, lake and river ice, and seasonally frozen ground and permafrost.

The **geosphere** is the solid Earth that includes the continental and oceanic crust as well as the various layers of the Earth's interior.

The **hydrosphere** includes the water of the Earth, including surface lakes, streams, oceans, underground water, and water in the atmosphere.

