



Planes regularly fly around the world and no one has ever reported finding the 'edge' of the Earth.

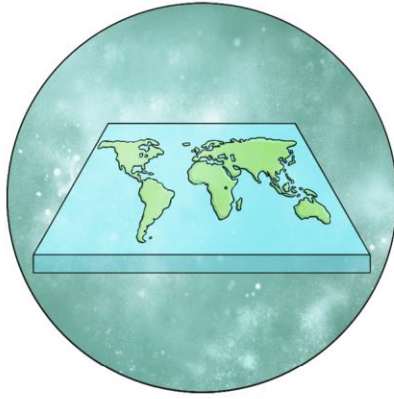


The early ancient Greeks, Sumerians, Babylonians, Egyptians and Vikings all believed that the Earth was a flat disc or plane surrounded by water. This was based on the evidence of what they saw around them.

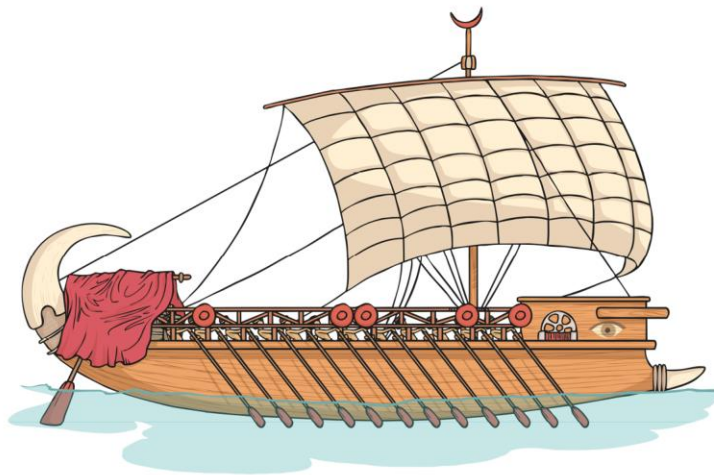


Picture shows a Babylonian map of a flat Earth.





The ancient Chinese believed that the Earth was a flat square shape surrounded by heavens that were a round egg shape. This was based on their belief in a heaven that was above the Earth.



An ancient Greek writer, Herodotus, reported the findings of a group of explorers and traders called the Phoenicians. While travelling by boat around Africa, they found that the Sun was not above them but to their right. If the Earth is flat, then the Sun should always be above you.



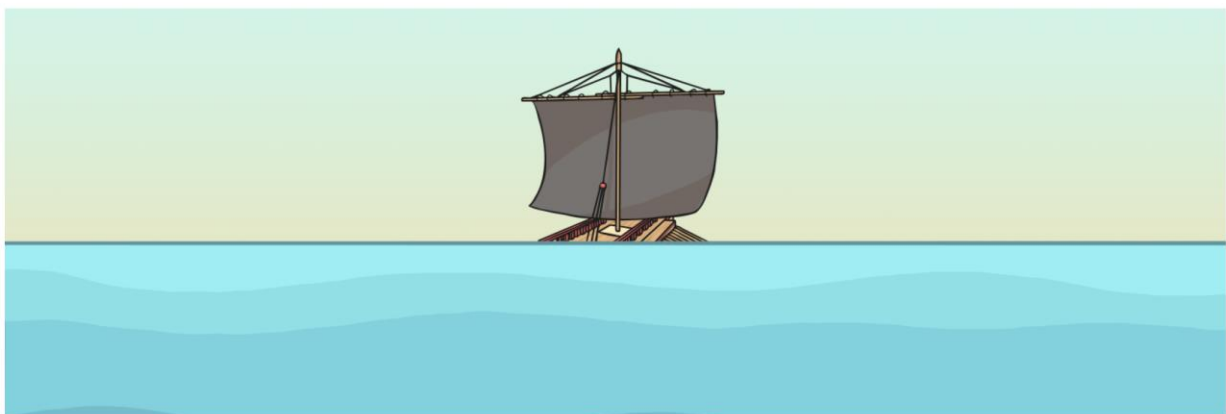


Aristotle (384-322 BC) believed that the Earth was a sphere based on his observations of ships with tall masts moving across the horizon.



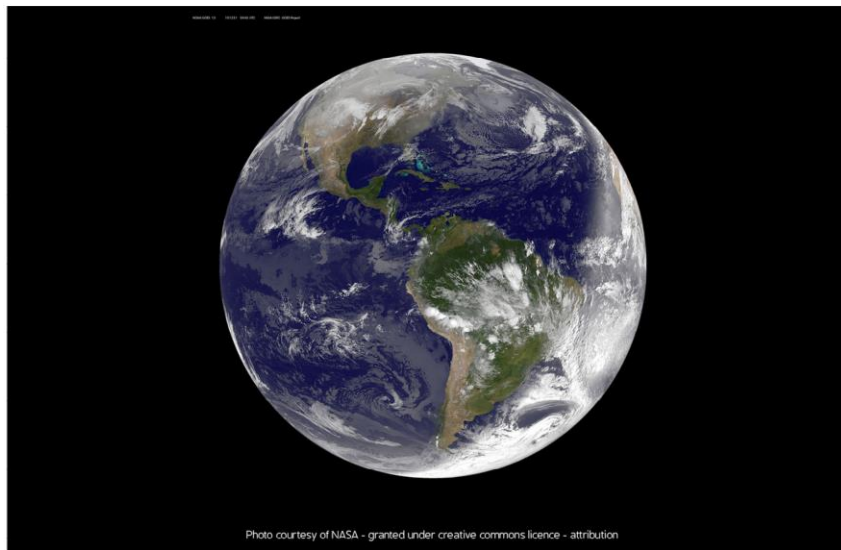
If the Earth were flat then the whole ship would get smaller as it moved further away. As it moved further, you would be able to see the whole of the ship getting smaller.

Aristotle observed that when ships sailed over the horizon the bottom part of a ship, the hull, actually disappeared from view. If it moved further the less of the ship you could see - this could only happen if the Earth was spherical.



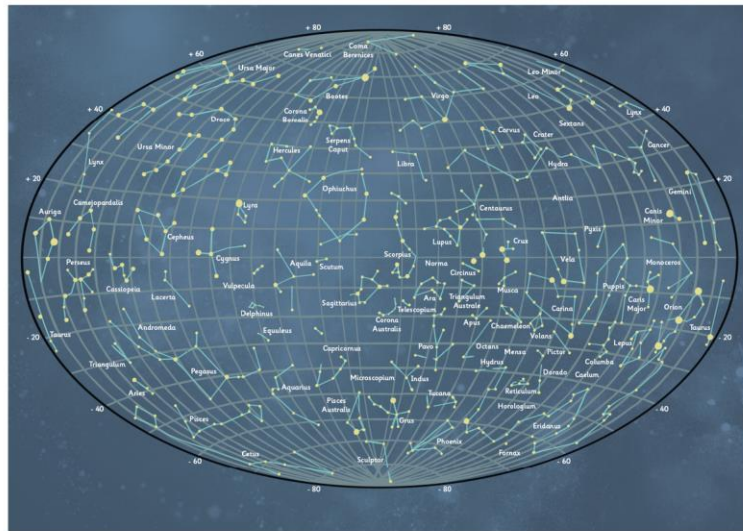


Observations of the shadow cast by the Earth on the Moon were used as evidence that the Earth was spherical.



Photographs of the Earth have been taken in outer space. No matter where around the Earth the pictures have been taken, they always show a circular Earth. This can only be the case if the Earth is spherical.



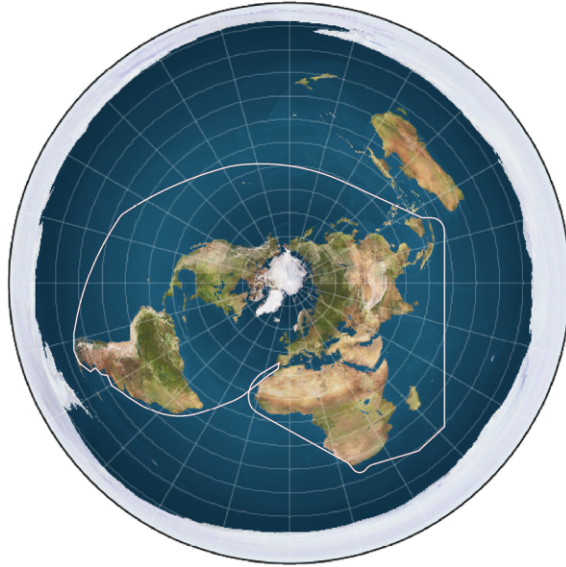


If the Earth were flat then everyone would see the same constellations (groups of stars) wherever they were. However, travellers and sailors observed that in fact they saw different constellations depending on where they were.



Ships have circumnavigated (gone all the way around) the world. If the Earth were flat then they would have reached its edge eventually. The picture shows the journey around the world that Magellan and Elcano took between 1519 and 1522.





Some people who still support the flat Earth idea believe that the sailors only think they have gone all around the globe because of where they have travelled. They think the sailors have merely travelled around the continents (see picture above).

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