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Deeply involved. [$\langle$ OE *ēare*. See *ous*-*.]
—*eared* *adj.* —*ear'less* *adj.*

ear² (îr') *n.* The seed-bearing spike of a cereal plant, such as corn. [$\langle$ OE *ear*. See *ak*-*.]

ear•ache (îr'āk') *n.* Pain in the ear.

ear•drum (îr'drūm') *n.* The thin membrane that separates the middle ear from the external ear.

ear•flap (îr'flāp') *n.* A flap attached to a cap used to cover the ears.

ear•ful (îr'fōl') *n.* 1. An excessive amount of something heard. 2. Scandalous gossip. 3. A reprimand.

Ear•hart (âr'härt'), *Amelia*. 1897?–1937. Amer. aviator.



Amelia Earhart

earl (ûrl) *n.* A British nobleman next in rank above a viscount and below a marquis. [$\langle$ OE *eorl*, nobleman.] —*earl'dom* *n.*

ear•lobe (îr'lōb') *n.* The soft pendulous lower part of the external ear.

ear•ly (ûr'lē) *adj.* —*li•er*, —*li•est*. 1. Of or occurring near the beginning of a series, period of time, or course of events. 2. Belonging to a previous or remote period of time: *early mammals*. 3. Occurring or developing before the expected time. 4. Occurring in the near future: *predicted an early end to the negotiations*. —*adv.* —*li•er*, —*li•est*. 1. Near the beginning of a given series, period of time, or course of events. 2. At or during a remote or initial period. 3. Before the expected or usual time: *arrived early*. [$\langle$ OE *ærlīce*.] —*ear'li•ness* *n.*

ear•mark (îr'märk') *n.* 1. An identifying feature or characteristic. 2. A brand on the ear of a domestic animal. —*v.* 1. To set aside for a particular purpose. See *Syns* at *allocate*. 2. To brand with an earmark.

ear•muff (îr'mūf') *n.* Either of a pair of ear coverings worn to protect against the cold.

earn (ûrn) *v.* 1. To gain esp. for the performance of service or labor. 2. To acquire or deserve as a result of effort or action. 3. To yield as return or profit. [$\langle$ OE *earnian*.] —*earn'er* *n.*

Syns: *earn*, *deserve*, *merit*, *rate*, *win* *v.*
earned run (ûrnd) *n.* Baseball. A run scored without the aid of an error.

ear•nest¹ (ûr'nĭst) *adj.* 1. Showing deep sincerity or seriousness. 2. Of an important nature; grave. —*idiom*. *in earnest*. With a purposeful or sincere intent. [$\langle$ OE *eornoste*.] —*ear'nest•ly* *adv.* —*ear'nest•ness* *n.*

ear•nest² (ûr'nĭst) *n.* Money paid in advance as part payment to bind a contract or bargain. [$\langle$ Heb. *'ērābôn*.]

earn•ings (ûr'nĭngz) *pl.n.* 1. Salary or wages. 2. Profits from business or investments.

ear•phone (îr'fōn') *n.* A device that converts electric signals to audible sound and fits over or in the ear.

ear•piece (îr'pēs') *n.* 1. A part, as of a telephone receiver, that fits in or is held next to the ear. 2. See *earphone*. 3. Either of the two parts of an eyeglasses frame that extend over the ear.

ear•plug (îr'plūg') *n.* 1. A soft plug fitted into the ear canal to keep out water or sound. 2. An earphone that fits into the ear.

ear•ring (îr'rĭng, îr'ĭng) *n.* An ornament worn on the ear, esp. the earlobe.

ear•shot (îr'shōt') *n.* The range within which sound can be heard.

ear•split•ting (îr'splīt'ĭng) *adj.* Loud and shrill enough to hurt the ears. See *Syns* at *loud*.

earth (ûrth) *n.* 1.a. The land surface of the world. b. Soil, esp. productive soil. 2. Often *Earth*. The 3rd planet from the sun, at a mean distance of approx. 149 million km (92.96 million mi) and with an average radius of 6,374 km (3,959 mi). 3. The realm of mortal existence. 4. Worldly pursuits. —*idioms*. *down to earth*. Sensible; realistic. *on earth*. Among all the possibilities: *Why on earth did you go?* [$\langle$ OE *eorthe*.]

earth•en (ûr'thən, -thən) *adj.* Made of earth or clay.

earth•en•ware (ûr'thən-wâr', -thən-) *n.* Pottery made from a porous clay fired at low temperatures.

earth•ling (ûrth'lĭng) *n.* One that inhabits the planet Earth.

earth•ly (ûrth'lē) *adj.* 1. Of or characteristic of this earth; terrestrial. 2. Not heavenly or divine; worldly. 3. Conceivable; possible: *no earthly reason*. —*earth'li•ness* *n.*

earth•mov•er (ûrth'mōō'vər) *n.* A machine, such as a bulldozer, used for digging or pushing earth. —*earth'mov'ing* *adj.*

earth•quake (ûrth'kwāk') *n.* A sudden movement of the earth's crust caused by stress accumulated along geologic faults or volcanic activity.

earth science *n.* Any of several geologic sciences concerned with the origin, structure, and physical phenomena of the earth.

earth•shak•ing (ûrth'shā'kĭng) *adj.* Of great consequence or importance.

earth•ward (ûrth'wərd) *adv.* & *adj.* To or toward the earth. —*earth'wards* *adv.*

earth•work (ûrth'wûrk') *n.* An earthen embankment, esp. one used as a fortification.

earth•worm (ûrth'wûrm') *n.* Any of a class of annelid worms that burrow into and aerate soil.

earth•y (ûr'thē) *adj.* —*i•er*, —*i•est*. 1. Of, consisting of, or resembling earth. 2. Crude; indecent. 3. Hearty or uninhibited. —*earth'i•ly* *adv.* —*earth'i•ness* *n.*

ear•wax (îr'wāks') *n.* The waxlike secretion of certain glands lining the canal of the external ear.

ear•wig (îr'wĭg') *n.* An elongate insect having a pair of pincerlike appendages protruding from the rear of the abdomen. [$\langle$ OE *earwicga*: *ear*, *EAR*¹ + *wicga*, insect.]

ease (ēz) *n.* 1. Freedom from pain, worry, or agitation. 2. Freedom from constraint or embarrassment; naturalness. 3. Freedom