

## ABSOLUTE LOCATION

the exact location of a place on the earth—described by its global coordinates (longitude and latitude)

## BASIN

an area of land drained by a given river and its branches

an area of land surrounded by higher land

## BAY

part of a large body of water that extends into a shoreline, generally smaller than a gulf

## CANYON

a deep and narrow valley with steep walls

## CAPE

a point of land that extends into a river, lake, or ocean

## UPSTREAM

direction opposite to the flow of a river or stream—toward the source

## CLIFF

a steep, high wall of rock, earth, or ice

## CONTINENT

one of the seven large landmasses on the earth

## DIVIDE

a stretch of high land that separates river systems

## DELTA

flat, low-lying land built up from soil carried downstream by a river and deposited at its mouth

## ELEVATION

the height of land above sea level

## DOWNSTREAM

direction in which a river or stream flows from its source to its mouth

## CHANNEL

a wide strait or waterway between two landmasses that lie close to each other

a deep part of a river or other waterway

## CULTURAL FEATURE

characteristic that humans have created in a place, such as language, religion, housing, and settlement patterns

## EQUATOR

an imaginary line that runs around the earth halfway between the North and South Poles—used as a starting point to measure latitude

## ISTHMUS

a narrow stretch of land connecting two larger land areas

## LAKE

a sizeable inland body of water

## LATITUDE

the distance north or south of the Equator, measured in degrees

## MOUNTAIN

land with steep sides that rises sharply (1000 feet or more) from surrounding land—generally larger and more rugged than a hill

## GULF

a large body of water that extends into a shoreline, generally larger and more deeply indented than a bay

## HARBOR

a sheltered place along the shoreline where ships can safely anchor

## HIGHLAND

elevated land area such as a hill, mountain, or plateau

## HILL

elevated land with sloping sides and rounded summit, generally smaller than a mountain

## ISLAND

a land area, smaller than a continent, completely surrounded by water

## LONGITUDE

the distance east or west of the Prime Meridian, measured in degrees

## LOWLAND

land, usually relatively level, at a low elevation

## MAP

a drawing of the earth shown on a flat surface

## OCEAN CURRENT

a stream of either warm or cold water that moves in a definite direction through the ocean

## MESA

broad, flat-topped landform with steep sides—smaller than a plateau

## GLACIER

large, thick body of slowly-moving ice

## MOUNTAIN PEAK

the pointed top of a mountain

## MOUNTAIN RANGE

a series of connected mountains

## MOUTH

the place where a river or stream flows into a larger body of water

## MERIDIAN

one of many imaginary lines on the global grid running from the North Pole to the South Pole—used to measure degrees of longitude

## OCEAN

one of the *five* major bodies of salt water that surround the continents: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic, and Southern

## PARALLEL

one of many imaginary lines on the global grid that circle the earth north or south of the Equator—used to measure degrees of latitude

## PENINSULA

a body of land that juts into a lake or ocean, surrounded on three sides by water

## RELIEF

changes in elevation over a given area of land

## PLAIN

an area of level land, usually at a low elevation and often covered with grasses

## PLATEAU

an area of flat or rolling land at a high elevation—about 300 to 3000 feet above sea level

## PRIME MERIDIAN

the imaginary line on the global grid that run from the North Pole to the South Pole through the city of Greenwich, England—it is the starting point for measuring degrees of longitude

## PHYSICAL FEATURE

characteristic of a place occurring naturally, such as a landform, a body of water, a climate pattern, or a resource

## RIVER

a large, natural stream of water that runs through the land

## SEA

a large body of water completely or partly surrounded by land

## SEACOAST

land lying next to a sea or ocean

## SEA LEVEL

the position on land level with the surface of a nearby ocean or sea

## SOUND

a body of water between a coastline and one or more islands off the coast

## SOURCE

the place where a river or stream begins, often in the highlands

## STRAIT

a narrow stretch of water joining two larger bodies of water

also called a “narrows”

## TRIBUTARY

a small river or stream that flows into a larger river or stream

a branch of a river

## VOLCANO

a mountain created as liquid rock or ash erupt from inside the earth

## WETLAND

an area of land that seldom dries out, so plants in wetlands are adapted to life in wet soil

## OASIS

a place in the desert that has water and is fertile

## POND

a small body of water surrounded by land, smaller than a lake

## ARCHIPELAGO

a group or chain of islands clustered together in a sea or ocean

## CANAL

a man-made waterway used for transportation or irrigation

## COVE

A small, horseshoe-shaped body of water along the coast—the water is surrounded by land formed of soft rock

## ATOLL

a ring (or partial ring) of coral that forms an island in an ocean or sea

## FJORD

a long, narrow sea inlet that is bordered by steep cliffs

## BUTTE

a flat-topped rock or hill formation with steep sides

## ESTUARY

where a river meets the sea or ocean

## MARSH

a type of freshwater, brackish water, or saltwater wetland that is

## VALLEY

an area of low land between hills or mountains



## DESERT

a very dry area

## REEF

an undersea growth of coral near the surface of the water

## RESERVOIR

a man-made lake that stores water for future use

## SWAMP

a type of freshwater wetland that has spongy, muddy land and a lot of water—many trees and shrubs grow there

## LAGOON

a shallow body of water that is located alongside a coast and separated from the ocean by a strip of land or a sandbank

## WATERFALL

where a river falls off steeply from the land

## TUNDRA

a cold, treeless area, the coldest biome

## DUNE

a hill or a ridge made of sand, constantly shaped and changed by the wind

## ATOLL

a ring (or partial ring) of coral that forms an island in an ocean or sea