

Landforms Vocabulary

| Word | Definition |
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| landforms | shapes of the Earth's surface; examples are valleys, mountains, plains and canyons |
| archaeologist | a scientist who studies material remains, such as fossils, to learn about the past |
| fossil | a trace, imprint, or remains of a plant or animal of the past preserved in the Earth's crust |
| chemical weathering | the decomposition of rocks due to chemical reactions occurring between the minerals in rocks and the environment; caused by chemicals found in water, acids, and oxidation |
| physical weathering | also known as mechanical weathering, it is the process that breaks rocks apart without changing their chemical composition; can be caused by moving water, ice, and plant roots |
| weathering | the process in which rocks are either broken into smaller particles (physical weathering) or changed into other kinds of minerals (chemical weathering). |
| canyon | A V-shaped valley eroded by a river. |
| Delta | A fan-shaped deposit at the mouth of the river. |
| Deposition | A process by which eroded earth materials settle out in another place. |
| Dune | A mound, hill, or ridge of wind-blown sand. |
| Erosion | The process by which soil and rock are removed from the Earth's surface, transported and deposited in other locations. |
| Floodplain | The land that gets covered by water from a stream or river during a flood. |
| Meander | A curve or loop in a river. |
| Mountain | High, uplifted area with steep slopes. |
| Plateau | Nearly level area that has been uplifted. |
| Sediment | Eroded earth materials. |
| Valley | A low area between hills and mountains; often where a river flows. |
| Acid rain | Rain containing acids that form in the atmosphere when industrial gas emissions combine in the water. |
| erosion | the process of carrying away earth materials by water, wind, or ice |
| basin | a low area in which sediments are often deposited |
| glacier | A huge mass of ice slowly flowing over a land mass, formed from compacted snow in an area where snow accumulation exceeds melting |

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| limestone | A type of sedimentary rock consisting of the mineral calcium carbonate |
| channel | the course or path water takes over the earth's surface |
| alluvial fan | the fan-shaped landform made up of deposited sediments at the bottom of a slope |
| gravity | the force that attracts a body toward the center of the earth, or toward any other matter having mass |
| landslide landslide | the usually rapid downward movement of a mass of rock, earth, or artificial fill on a slope |
| slope | A surface of which one end or side is at a higher level than another; the angle or slant of a stream channel or land surface |
| lava | molten rock on the earth's surface |
| lava flow | stream of molten or hardened lava coming out from a volcano or crack in the earth's surface |
| magma | molten rock under the earth's surface |
| strata | layers of lava flows |
| volcano | a vent in the crust of the earth or another planet or a moon; usually molten or hot rock, steam, and gas come out of the vent ; also : a hill or mountain made up of hardened lava flows; usually have a crater or caldera |
| earthquake | A sudden and violent shaking of the ground, sometimes causing great destruction, as a result of movements within the earth's crust or volcanic activity |
| fault | a crack in the earth's crust |
| body fossils | preserved remains of body parts such as teeth, shells, or bones |
| cast fossil | a positive imprint of an organism preserved in rock; when a mold fossil fills in with minerals or sediment and hardens |
| fossil | the preserved remains of organisms |
| petrification | occurs when parts of the organism are saturated with minerals |
| mold fossils | a negative imprint of an organism preserved in rocks; a hollow space is left in the rock once the organism has decomposed |
| relative age | the geologic age of a fossil, rock, geologic feature or event relative to other fossils , rocks, geologic features or events |
| geologic time | a period of time covering the formation and development of earth |