

Erosion

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Glossary

arch rock with a curved opening caused by weathering and erosion

barrier island long, narrow offshore island

chemical weathering process that breaks down rocks by changing their chemical composition

continental glacier sheet of ice that covers a large area of land

convection transfer of heat energy by flowing matter

core center of Earth

crust thin, rocky outer layer of Earth

delta land formed where a river deposits its sediment into a lake or an ocean

deposition dropping of sediment by water, wind, or ice

dune mound of loose sand deposited by wind

earthquake vibrations caused by a sudden release of energy within Earth

erosion movement of soil and rocks by water, wind, or ice

fertile full of nutrients; good for growing plants

flood large amount of water covering land that is usually dry, often caused by heavy rains, melting snow, or high tides

floodplain flat area beside a river that is covered with water when a river floods

glacial till mixture of rocks and other materials left behind by a melting glacier

glacier large, slow-moving mass of ice

gravity force that causes materials to move downward; main force causing erosion and deposition

groundwater fresh water that is stored in the ground

humus decayed plant and animal matter in soil

landforms natural shapes or features on Earth's surface, such as mountains, hills, plateaus, valleys, canyons, plains, and barrier islands

mantle layer of rock beneath Earth's crust

mass movement downhill movement of large amounts of earth materials, such as rocks and soil, caused by gravity

mineral natural, nonliving, solid material found in or on Earth; building block of rocks

moraine ridges of glacial till

oxbow lake curved lake formed when a river straightens its course

physical weathering mechanical breakdown of rocks into smaller pieces by natural processes

plates very large sheets of crust and upper mantle that cover Earth

rock natural solid that is made up of minerals

runoff rainwater or melting snow that drains off the land into streams

sandbar ridge of offshore sand

sea-floor spreading process by which new oceanic crust is created as plates move apart

sediment particles of earth materials, such as rock, sand, and soil, that are formed by weathering and carried by moving water, wind, or ice

sinkhole hole on Earth's surface formed when the rock below has been dissolved by groundwater

soil loose material that covers much of Earth, made of weathered rock, humus, air, and water

soil horizon soil layer

soil profile cutaway view showing the different layers of soil

stack column that forms when the top part of an arch collapses

subduction process in which the edge of one plate sinks beneath the edge of another plate

valley glacier river of ice that moves slowly through high mountain valleys because of gravity

volcanic island landform that develops when an undersea volcano grows high enough to reach above the water's surface

volcano opening in Earth's crust through which magma erupts from the mantle; a mountain formed from past eruptions

weathering process of breaking down rocks into smaller pieces by water, wind, temperature changes, and other factors