

Oceans

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Glossary

abyssal plain large, flat area on the ocean floor

atoll ring-shaped island formed by coral reefs around an underwater volcano

bay small area of ocean that is partly enclosed by land

continental rise gentle rise at the base of the steeper continental slope

continental shelf gently sloping underwater edge of a continent

continental slope ocean floor from the edge of the continental shelf to the continental rise

coral reef ridge of coral near the surface of the ocean in warm, shallow water

crest highest point of a wave

current river of water that flows through the ocean

deep-water current ocean water that sinks and flows at deep levels because it is more dense than the water around it; also called *density current* or *convection current*

density amount of matter in a given volume of something

desalination process that removes salts from ocean water

estuary area where a river flows into the ocean

gulf large area of ocean that is partly enclosed by land

headland point of high land jutting out into water

hydrothermal vent hot-water spring on the ocean floor, usually on mid-ocean ridges

intertidal zone area along a shore that is covered with water at high tide and exposed to air at low tide

jetty structure built to stick out into the water from the shoreline

marine biologist scientist who studies living things in oceans

mid-ocean ridge underwater mountain range where sea-floor spreading happens

near-shore zone shallow part of the ocean that extends from the breaking waves to water 200 meters (656 feet) deep

nekton living things that are able to swim through ocean water to search for food

ocean large body of salty water

ocean basin deep part of the ocean beyond the continental rise

open-ocean zone part of the ocean that is 200 meters (656 feet) deep or greater

plankton tiny living things that drift with the ocean currents

rift valley that runs along the top of a mid-ocean ridge

salinity measure of how salty water is

sea-floor spreading formation of new ocean floor where plates move apart

seamount underwater volcano

shoreline area where the ocean meets land

submersible underwater vehicle

surface current current that flows at the ocean's surface

tide regular, alternating rise and fall of the ocean's surface level, caused mostly by the Moon's gravity

tide pool small pool of water left behind along a shoreline at low tide

trench deep, narrow valley in the ocean floor

trough lowest point of a wave

upwelling upward movement of deep water to the surface, especially along some shores

water cycle movement of water between Earth's land, air, and bodies of water

water pressure force caused by the weight of water pushing down on something

wave rhythmic movement that carries energy through matter or space