

**Table 7.6.** Common features of the seafloor and coastline

<p><b>Abyssal plain.</b> A flat region of deep ocean basins.</p> <p><b>Alluvial fan.</b> A broad, sloping deposit of sediments at the mouth of a river or at the foot of a submarine canyon or a river canyon.</p> <p><b>Atoll.</b> A ring-shaped coral reef surrounding a lagoon. It may have low sand islands. Atolls rest on submerged volcanic islands.</p> <p><b>Bank.</b> A navigable shallow area of the ocean caused either by elevation of the seafloor or by submergence of a landmass.</p> <p><b>Bay.</b> An inlet of the sea; an indentation in the shoreline, often between headlands or capes.</p> <p><b>Cape.</b> A large point or extension of land jutting into a body of water. A cape may be a peninsula or a hook of land.</p> <p><b>Channel.</b> A deeper part of a river or harbor that is navigable. The word is sometimes used to name a broad strait.</p> <p><b>Cliff.</b> A very steep or overhanging land feature.</p> <p><b>Coast.</b> A strip of land bordering the sea.</p> <p><b>Continental shelf.</b> The land forming the shallow seafloor extending outward from the edge of a continent; submerged part of a continent extending outward 15 km to 50 km to the continental slope.</p> <p><b>Continental slope.</b> The sloping front of a continental shelf; the place where the continent ends. These are long slopes, often 20 km to 40 km wide or more. The bottom of the continental slope is the continental rise.</p> <p><b>Continental rise.</b> The area of the continental shelf between the continental slope and the deep seafloor where sediments from the continent accumulate.</p> <p><b>Delta.</b> An alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river.</p> <p><b>Estuary.</b> A river mouth or channel, or the drowned seaward end of a valley where fresh water from land mixes with seawater. River flow in some estuaries continues across the continental shelf, carving out a submarine canyon.</p> <p><b>Guyot.</b> A seamount with a flat top. Guyot tops are always below the ocean surface. Also called a tablemount.</p> <p><b>Headland.</b> A cape or other landform jutting into the ocean. It is usually high above water and prominent when viewed from the sea.</p> <p><b>Island.</b> A landmass smaller than a continent and surrounded by water.</p> <p><b>Island chain.</b> A group of islands formed by the same geological process (also called an archipelago).</p> <p><b>Isthmus.</b> A narrow strip of land connecting two larger landmasses.</p> <p><b>Lagoon.</b> A shallow body of quiet water almost completely cut off from the open ocean by coral reefs, barrier islands, or barrier beaches.</p> <p><b>Ocean basin.</b> A large depression in the earth's crust that holds the water of an ocean.</p> <p><b>Ocean ridge.</b> A long, continuous mountain range on the seafloor. Ocean ridges are often of volcanic origin at a point or line of separation in the earth's crust.</p> <p><b>Ocean trench.</b> A deep cut or trench in the seafloor, usually close to where continental shelves and seafloors meet.</p> <p><b>Peninsula.</b> A piece of land almost completely surrounded by water. It is usually connected to a larger land body by a narrow land strip called a neck or an isthmus.</p> <p><b>Point.</b> The narrow tip-end of a cape, headland, peninsula, or other land feature jutting into a body of water.</p> <p><b>Reef.</b> A shallow rock or coral formation often exposed at low tide. A <b>fringing reef</b> forms along the shore; a <b>barrier reef</b> is an offshore coral ridge.</p> <p><b>Seamount.</b> An isolated undersea hill or mountain. It is usually in the form of a cone.</p> <p><b>Shoal.</b> An area of the ocean, such as a sandbar, that is too shallow to navigate.</p> <p><b>Sound.</b> A wide waterway connecting two larger bodies of water. It may be a body of water between the mainland and an offshore island.</p> <p><b>Strait.</b> A long, narrow water passage connecting two larger bodies of water.</p>
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