

# Challenge A Geography Terms

**For tutor/parent use only.**

Students should practice dictionary skills in this exercise.

**ALTITUDE** – elevation or height above sea level

**ARCHIPELAGO** – a group or chain of many islands in a sea (usually shaped like an arch)

**ARM** – an inlet from the sea or other body of water

**ATOLL** – a small island the shape of a ring or horseshoe formed by deposits of coral sea animals.

**BANK** – the steep or sloping border of any stream

**BASIN** – a low place in the surface of the land, usually with a body of water occupying the lowest part

**BAY** – any inlet of the ocean or part of the ocean bordering on land and partly surrounded by land.

**BAYOU** – a slow, sluggish stream; usually used to describe inlets from the Gulf of Mexico or from the Mississippi River

**BEACH** – the pebbly or sandy shore of the sea or of a lake that is washed by the waves

**BLUFF** – a steep, high bank beside a body of water

**BOG** – very wet, spongy ground not able to support much weight, usually made up of decayed plants

**BRANCH** – a small stream or creek emptying into a larger stream

**BREAKERS** – waves breaking into foam as they approach or dash against the shore

**BRINK** – the very edge at the top of a bluff, cliff, or precipice

**BROOK** – a natural stream of running water smaller than a river or a creek

**CANAL** – a constructed channel filled with water used for navigation, irrigation, or drainage.

**CANYON** – a deep, narrow valley having high, steep slopes

**CAPE** – a narrow piece of land projecting into the sea

**CAVE** – a deep, hollowed-out area under the earth's surface

**CAVERN** – a large cave of room size or larger

**CHANNEL** – a narrow strip of water

**CHASM** – an empty, deep gap in the surface of the earth

**CINDER CONE** – a cone-shaped mass of material made by volcanic eruption

**CLIFF** – the steep, rocky face of a bluff

**COAST** – land along the sea

**CONTINENT** – any one of the seven largest areas of land on the Earth's surface

**CONTINENTAL SHELF** – the shallow sea area bordering the continents

**COUNTRY** – a nation or area of land that is politically controlled by one government

**COVE** – a small, sheltered inlet from any body of water

**CRAG** – a projecting point of rock, usually perpendicular or nearly so

**CRATER** – the bowl shaped opening at the top of a volcano

**CREEK** – a natural stream of running water larger than a brook but smaller than a river

## Challenge A Geography Terms

CULTIVATED LAND – land that is plowed or spaded and used for growing crops

CURRENT – the swiftly moving part of a stream

DALE – a small valley

DAM – a bank or wall built across a stream to hold back water

DELL – a small, sheltered valley or ravine

DELTA – a deposit, usually triangular in shape, of sand and soil that forms at the mouth of a river

DESERT – a large area of land with little or no moisture or vegetation

DIKE – earth or other material built up along a river or ocean to keep the water from overflowing onto land

DIVIDE – a water parting or watershed that separates two drainage areas

DOWNSTREAM – the direction in which a stream is flowing

DRAINAGE BASIN – the area from which a single stream or river and its tributaries drains all of the water

DUNE – a hill or ridge of sand piled up by the wind

EARTH – the planet on which people live

ELEVATION – height or distance above sea level

ESTUARY – a narrow arm of the sea at the mouth of a river where the ocean tide meets the river current

FALL LINE – the line connecting the places where streams emerge from the uplands onto lowlands usually marked by waterfalls or rapids

FIELD – an area of cleared land, often bounded by fences

FJORD – a deep, narrow inlet of the sea between high, steep banks

FOOTHILL – a hill at the base of a mountain

FORD – a shallow place where a stream or body of water may be crossed by wading or driving through the water

FOREST – a large area of land covered with trees

GLACIER – a large sheet or stream of ice formed in an area, usually at high elevations where the temperature remains below or near freezing and more snow accumulates in winter than melts in summer

GLEN – a small valley usually long, narrow, and with steep sides

GORGE – a narrow passage between steep mountains or hills

GROVE – a group of trees smaller than a forest, generally without undergrowth

GULCH – a narrow, rocky valley or gorge: a ravine

GULF – an area of water bordering on, and lying within, a curved coastline

HARBOR – a sheltered body of water where ships anchor and are protected from storms

HEADLAND – a high area of land with a steep slope, projecting into a body of water

HILL – a small area of land that is higher than the land around it

HORIZON – the line where the earth's surface and the sky seem to meet

ICEBERG – a huge block of floating ice broken from a glacier, found in the most northerly and southerly areas of the world's oceans

INLET – a small opening between a small and a larger body of water

## Challenge A Geography Terms

IRRIGATED LAND – land watered by artificial means through the use of small canals or ditches

ISLAND – an area of land surrounded by water

ISTHMUS – a narrow piece of land joining two larger bodies of land, or joining a peninsula with a mainland

JUNCTION – the meeting point of two streams, roads, or railroads

KEYS – an island or reef that does not stick up very far above the water

KNOB – a smooth, rounded hill

KNOLL – a small, round hill or mound

LAGOON – a pool of shallow water connected to the sea by an inlet

LAKE – an inland body of water usually of considerable size

LAND – the portion of the earth's surface above the level of the sea or ocean

LATITUDE – latitude is a north-south measurement of position on the Earth

LEDGE – a projection of rock having the appearance of a shelf

LEFT BANK – the bank of a stream which lies on the left side as one goes with the current

LEVEE – an embankment beside a stream which prevents overflow

LOCKS – an enclosure with gates built in a canal or river so that ships can be raised or lowered by changing the water level

LONGITUDE – longitude is a west-east measurement of position on the Earth

MARSH – an area of low, wet, poorly drained land

MEADOW – an area of level land where grass is grown and usually cut for hay

MESA – a flat topped, rocky hill with steeply sloping sides

MINE – a pit from which coal, minerals, or precious stones are taken by digging

MOUNTAIN – a lofty elevation on the earth's surface

MOUNTAIN CHAIN – a chain of mountains

MOUNTAIN RANGE – a series of connecting mountains

MOUTH – end of a stream; point at which a stream enters a lake, sea, or ocean.

MOOR – an area of open wasteland, often swampy

NATURAL RESOURCE – supplies of materials founding nature, such as minerals, water, or coal

OASIS – a fertile spot within a desert watered by underground springs or by irrigation

OCEAN – any one, or all, of the four largest connecting bodies of salt water on the earth's surface

PASS – an opening through hills or mountains used as a route for highways or railroads

PASTURE – land where grass and other plants grow and where cattle, sheep, etc. can graze

PEAK – the pointed top of a hill or mountain

PENINSULA – a piece of land nearly surrounded by water and attached to a larger area of land or the mainland by an isthmus

PIEDMONT – an area of rolling land along the foot of a mountain range

PIER – a structure projecting into the water and used as a docking or loading place for ships

## Challenge A Geography Terms

PLAIN – a nearly level area of land usually of considerable size

PLATEAU – a large, level, or nearly level, area of elevated land

POINT – a tapering piece of land projecting sharply into a stream or body of water

POND – a body of still water smaller than a lake

POOL – a deep spot in a stream

PRAIRIE – any natural grassland but usually used to describe the vast areas of level or rolling land without trees in the central part of the United States

PRECIPICE – a very steep, high cliff

RAPIDS – part of a stream where the water flows very swiftly over rocks

REEF – a series of rocks in a body of water, the tops of which are slightly beneath, or at, the surface

RESERVOIR – a natural or artificial lake, usually made by damming a stream of running water

RIDGE – a long, narrow, conspicuous elevation of land

RIGHT BANK – the bank of a stream which lies on the right side as one goes with the current

RIVER – a large stream of water of natural origin which drains an area of land and flows into another river or body of water

RIVER MOUTH – the point where a river empties and ends its course

RIVER SOURCE – the point where a river begins

SANDBAR – a long, narrow bank of sand in a body of water

SAVANNA – A tropical or subtropical grassland containing scattered trees and drought-resistant undergrowth.

SEA – a large body of water partly or nearly surrounded by land

SEA LEVEL – the average level of the surface of the ocean measured along a shoreline

SEAPORT – a harbor at the shore of the ocean or large body of water developed with facilities to load and unload sea-going vessels

SHOAL – any very shallow spot in a body of water

SHORE – land bordering the sea, a lake, or a large river

SHORELINE – the line where the land meets the water of any large river or body of water

SLOPE – any land whose surface gradually rises in a general direction

SNOWLINE – the line on a mountain above which there is snow the year around

SOIL – loose material which forms the upper surface of the earth

SOUND – a long and rather narrow body of water, larger than a strait, connecting two large bodies of water or separating a large island from the mainland

SPIT – a long narrow sandy point of land projecting into water

STEPPE – Russian term for mid-latitude grasslands

STRAIT – a passageway of water connecting two large bodies of water

STREAM – a flow of moving water

SUMMIT – highest part of a hill or mountain

SWAMP – an area of low spongy land too wet to farm but usually supporting an abundance of coarse grasses, trees, or other vegetation

# Challenge A Geography Terms

**TABLELAND** – a level area of high land varying in size from a mesa to an extensive plateau

**TERRACE** – a level and rather narrow area of land with one steep edge bordering a river, a lake, or the sea

**TIDE** – alternate rise and fall of the water level of a lake or ocean caused by gravitational pull of the moon on the earth

**TIMBER** – forest land covered by trees of sufficient size, kind, and quality to be of commercial value

**TIMBERLINE** – the line on a mountain above which trees do not grow

**TOPOGRAPHY** – the surface features of a region (hills, rivers, roads, etc.)

**TRIBUTARY** – a stream that flows into another stream

**TUNDRA** – a large flat plain without trees in the arctic regions

**TUNNEL** – an artificial passage beneath the surface of the earth

**UPSTREAM** – direction from which a stream is flowing

**VALE** – low land between two hills

**VALLEY** – the land between hills or mountains, usually containing a stream

**VEGETATION** – growing plants

**VOLCANO** – an opening in the earth's surface from which flows, or has flowed, molten rock, steam, cinders, gas, and rock fragments

**WATERFALL** – a stream of water dropping over a dam or precipice

**WATERSHED** – the elevated land or divide separating two drainage areas

**WAVES** – a moving ridge of water which rises and falls

**WHARF** – a large dock from which ships may load or unload

**WHIRLPOOL** – any place where water flows in a small circle usually caused by the current of a stream striking a bank or by two currents meeting

**WOODS** – an area of land covered with trees