

Earth Movements

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Glossary

barrier island thin island offshore along a coast

canyon deep, narrow river valley with steep sides

continent one of the seven large land masses on Earth

continental drift theory that the continents moved apart over millions of years to their current locations

convection current movement of heat in a substance

core center of Earth

crust thin, rocky, outermost layer of Earth

deposition dropping of sediments by water, wind, or ice

earthquake vibrations on Earth's surface caused by sudden movement in Earth, often along a fault

epicenter point on Earth's surface directly above the focus of an earthquake

erosion moving of soil and rock by wind, water, or gravity

erupt to break through; to force out suddenly and violently

fault crack or break in Earth's crust

flood large amount of water that covers land that is usually dry

focus place in Earth where the energy of an earthquake is first released

fossil remains or imprint of an organism that lived long ago

glacial till mixture of rocks left behind by a melting glacier

glacier huge mass of slowly moving ice

hill raised landform with sloping sides, smaller than a mountain

inner core solid, innermost layer of Earth

landform natural shape or feature of Earth's surface

lava magma that has reached Earth's surface

magma hot, liquid rock

magma chamber pool of magma near the bottom of a volcano

mantle layer of rock beneath Earth's crust

mass movement downhill movement of earth materials, such as rocks and soil, by gravity; also called mass wasting

mid-ocean ridge mountain range on the ocean floor where new crust is forming

moraine ridge of glacial till

mountain landform that is much higher than the land around it, often rocky with steep sides

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

oceans large bodies of salt water that cover more than two-thirds of Earth

outer core liquid layer of Earth located between the mantle and the inner core

Pangaea huge land mass that existed about 225 million years ago, when all the present continents were joined

plain large, flat area of land

plateau broad area of high, flat land

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

rock cycle process by which rocks form, are weathered, and form again

sediments small bits of broken-down rock

seismic wave vibration from an earthquake that travels through Earth

seismograph instrument that measures and records the strength of seismic waves

seismologist scientist who studies earthquakes

subduction process in which two plates collide and the edge of one plate sinks beneath the edge of the other plate

trench deep, narrow valley on the ocean floor where subduction is taking place

valley low area between hills or mountains

vent opening through which heat or heated material escapes

vibration rapid back-and-forth movement

volcano opening in Earth's crust through which magma, gases, and ash reach Earth's surface

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

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