

## EARTH'S OCEANS

### Oceans as a Natural Resource

**Oceans** are a natural resource for the salt (that you eat on your fries) and the fish and other sea animals we eat (like tuna fish sandwiches).

### Ocean Currents

Oceans are ALWAYS moving because of currents and tides. Currents on the surface of the ocean are caused by wind. Currents move large amounts of water great distances.

### Ocean Tides

**Tides** are the periodic rising and lowering of the ocean levels.

Tides are caused by the gravitational pull of the moon and the sun. The sun, moon, and Earth are always moving.

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Earth

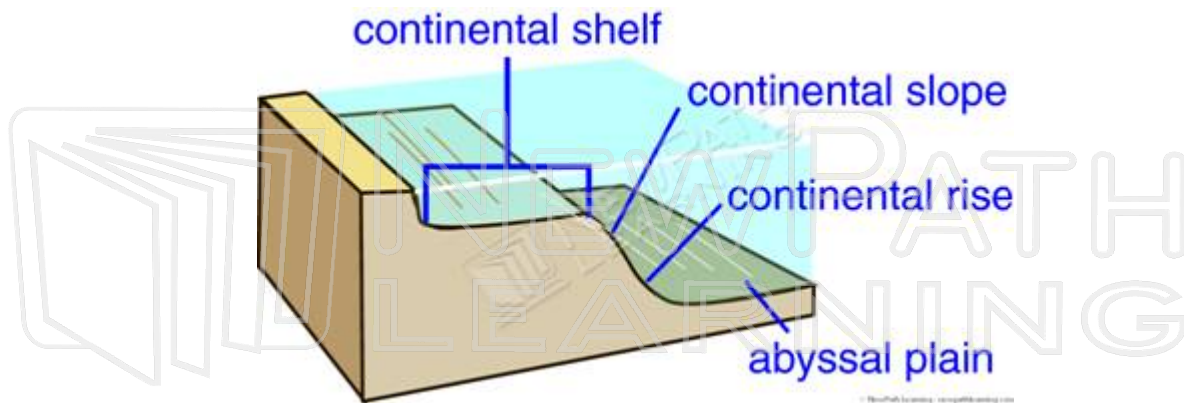
Moon



*Lesson Checkpoint:*  
*What causes ocean currents?*

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## The Continental Shelf



The sandy beach extends from the area you build sandcastles upon into the ocean onto an area called the **continental shelf**. The water above the continental shelf is most often shallow. The continental shelf gradually goes downward to form the continental slope.

## The Continental Shelf

The continental shelf is the part of the continental crust that extends into the ocean.

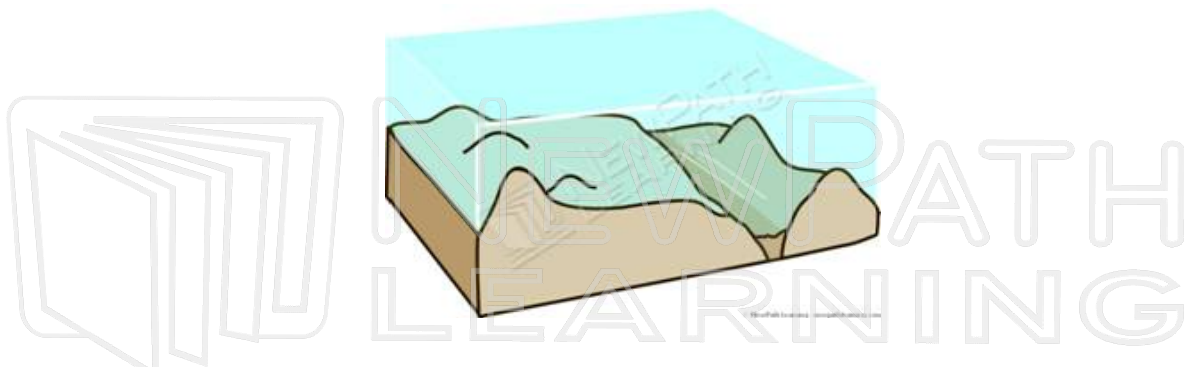


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## The Abyssal Plain

Sounds like a boring name, but it's one of the most interesting places on Earth's surface. The abyssal plain is a flat, deep-sea floor that extends for thousands of kilometers. A thick layer of sediment covers most of the plain's surface.



## Seamounts

A **seamount** is a mountain rising from the ocean seafloor that does not reach to the water's surface. It is a mountain under water.

## Trenches

An **ocean trench** is a long depression in the ocean floor that has steep sides.

*Lesson Checkpoint: What is a seamount?*

## Mid-Ocean Ridge

The **mid-ocean ridge** is a series of long, underwater mountain ranges on the ocean floor. The mid-ocean ridge extends through the North and South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the South Pacific.

## How do scientists explore the ocean?

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As you go deeper into the ocean, there is little to no light which means it is **COLD** and that there are no plants for food and not many other organisms to eat either!

*Lesson Checkpoint:*  
*Why do most sea organisms live in the epipelagic zone in the ocean?*

## Ocean pollution

Oil spills, toxic waste, litter, and other harmful materials dumped into the ocean in some way are all major causes of water pollution. Pollution in the ocean harms and kills ocean organisms. Ocean pollution can also indirectly affect our health and take away our resources – like the ones we mentioned at the very beginning of this tutorial—the salt and the food sources in the ocean.



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