

Project glossary

active volcano

A volcano that has erupted at least once in the last 10,000 years and will probably erupt again.

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cinder cone volcano

A cone-shaped volcano usually formed after an explosive eruption.

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continental crust

The part of the Earth's crust found under continents and land masses.

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continental drift

The gradual movement of the continents over the Earth's surface.

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convergent plate boundary

A type of tectonic plate boundary where two plates push together.

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crater

A large hole in the top of a volcano created after a volcanic eruption.

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crust

The outer layer of the Earth, made up of solid rock divided into tectonic plates.

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divergent plate boundary

A type of tectonic plate boundary where two plates pull apart.

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dormant volcano

A volcano that has not erupted for more than 10,000 years but may erupt again.

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earthquake

A sudden, violent shaking of the ground.

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effusive eruption

A type of volcanic eruption that occurs when the magma is runny and gases inside the volcano can escape easily.

epicentre

The place on the Earth’s surface nearest to the focus of an earthquake.

equator

An imaginary line around the middle of the Earth.

explosive eruption

A type of volcanic eruption that occurs when magma blasts through the throat of a volcano.

extinct volcano

A volcano that is not expected to erupt again and may no longer have a magma supply.

focus

The place inside the Earth’s crust where an earthquake starts.

fossil

The remains of a once-living organism preserved as rock.

igneous rock

A type of rock formed when molten rock cools and hardens.

inner core

The very hot, solid centre of the Earth.

latitude

A measure of distance north or south of the equator.

lava

Hot, molten rock that comes out of a volcano.

lava dome volcano

A volcano that is like a shield volcano, but with thicker, steeper sides.

longitude

A measure of distance east or west of the Prime Meridian.

magma

Hot molten rock found in the Earth’s mantle.

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mantle

The part of the Earth between the crust and the outer core that is made up of magma.

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metamorphic rock

A type of rock formed from sedimentary, igneous or existing metamorphic rock that has been changed over time due to pressure and heat underground.

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molten

Metal or rock that is in a liquid state because of great heat.

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oceanic crust

The part of the Earth’s crust found under seas and oceans.

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outer core

The part of the Earth that lies between the solid inner core and the mantle.

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palaeontology

The study of fossils.

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plate boundary

The place where tectonic plates meet.

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Prime Meridian

The line of longitude that passes through Greenwich in England and from which all other lines of longitude are measured.

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pyroclastic flow

The hot air, ash and rocks that rush downhill during a volcanic eruption.

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Richter scale

A scale used to measure the force of an earthquake.

sedimentary rock

A type of rock formed from particles of sand, shells and pebbles at the bottom of seas and rivers that get squashed and turn into rock over millions of years.

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seismic wave

A wave of energy caused by an earthquake that travels through the Earth or along its surface.

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shield volcano

A volcano with low, gently sloping sides, usually created by an effusive eruption.

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stratovolcano

A volcano with steep sides, usually formed by an explosive eruption.

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tectonic plate

A large, slow-moving piece of rock that makes up the Earth’s crust.

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transform plate boundary

A type of tectonic plate boundary where two plates slide against each other.

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tremor

A slight earthquake.

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tsunami

A series of waves in the sea or ocean caused by an earthquake or volcanic eruption.

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volcano

A physical feature, usually a conical mountain or a hill, that has a crater through which lava, rock fragments and hot gas erupt.

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volcanology

The study of volcanoes.