

Name _____



Landforms

By Sharon Fabian

Space aliens have just discovered earth! They are almost here! It's a nice sunny day, so they are looking out the windows of their spaceship to see what the earth looks like. What do they see first?



The first things that they would probably see are the shapes that make up the earth: the landforms and waterways. Large landforms like mountains and valleys can be seen from a long way up. Maybe you've seen some of them on pictures taken from a real spaceship flown by earth astronauts.

One good way to learn about the earth's landforms is to make a model of each one. You could use clay or other materials. One class made models from shaving cream!

Here are some of the main landforms.

mountain - Mountains are very high and rocky. They are higher than hills. Mountains can be pointed or rounded on top. The Himalayas are mountains. Mount Everest is the tallest one.

hill - Hills are like mountains but smaller. Some hills used to be mountains, but they were worn down over many years by wind and rain.

valley - Valleys are low land between two mountains.

canyon - A canyon is a deep valley with very steep sides. The Grand Canyon is one.

plain - Plains are large areas of low, flat land. The flat middle part of the United States is called the Great Plains.

plateau - A plateau is high like a hill, but flat on top like a plain.

island - Islands are small pieces of land. Each one is surrounded by water, like Hawaii.

peninsula - A peninsula is land that sticks out into the water. A peninsula is surrounded by water on three sides.

desert - A desert is dry and sandy land. The Sahara Desert is a very large desert.

swamp - A swamp is low land that is always soaked with water. Florida's Everglades are a good example.

Different plants and animals live on different landforms. Many kinds of large trees grow in the mountains. Bears live in the mountains, too. Grasses grow on the plains, and much of the plains have been turned into farmland to grow crops. At one time, huge herds of buffalo lived on the plains. Not too many plants grow in the desert, but cacti grow great there. Swamps are home to lots of watery plants and animals, like frogs. People live on almost all of these landforms now, but some are much more crowded with people than others.

If you were the alien, which landform would you choose to land your spaceship on? Would you choose a nice, flat plain? Or an island protected by water on all sides? What do you think you would see next?

Landforms

Questions

- _____ 1. This is low land between two mountains.
- A. plain
 - B. hill
 - C. valley
 - D. plateau
- _____ 2. This is like a mountain but smaller.
- A. valley
 - B. hill
 - C. plateau
 - D. plain

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- _____ 3. This is land surrounded by water on three sides.
- A. desert
 - B. peninsula
 - C. island
 - D. swamp
- _____ 4. This is low wet land.
- A. swamp
 - B. island
 - C. desert
 - D. peninsula
- _____ 5. Japan is one of these.
- A. island
 - B. peninsula
 - C. swamp
 - D. desert
- _____ 6. The Grand Canyon is _____.
- A. land surrounded by water
 - B. a dry, sandy area with no trees
 - C. a flat topped hill
 - D. a deep, narrow valley with steep sides
- _____ 7. The large shapes of land that make up the earth are all called _____.
- A. peninsulas
 - B. landforms
 - C. waterways
 - D. mountains
- _____ 8. Besides landforms, the other large features that cover the surface of the earth are _____.
- A. islands
 - B. waterways
 - C. deserts
 - D. lakes