



Reader's Guide

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From the perspective of human time, very little changes on the surface of Earth. From the perspective of geologic time, the period from Earth's beginning more than 4.5 billion years ago to the present day, however, the surface of the planet is in constant motion, being reshaped over and over. The constructive and destructive forces at play in this reshaping have helped create landforms, specific geomorphic features on Earth's land surface. Mountains and canyons, plains and plateaus, faults and basins: These are but a few of the varied and spectacular features that define the landscape of the planet.

U•X•L Encyclopedia of Landforms and Other Geologic Features explores twenty-two of these landforms: what they are, how they look, how they were created, how they change over time, and major geological events associated with them.

Scope and Format

In three volumes, *U•X•L Encyclopedia of Landforms and Other Geologic Features* is organized alphabetically into the following chapters:

Basin	Canyon
Cave	Coast and shore
Continental margin	Coral reef
Delta	Dune and other desert features
Fault	Floodplain
Geyser and hot spring	Glacial landforms and features
Landslide and other gravity movements	Mesa and butte

Meteorite crater	Mountain
Ocean basin	Plain
Plateau	Stream and river
Valley	Volcano

Each chapter begins with an overview of that specific landform. The remaining information in the chapter is broken into four sections:

- **The shape of the land** describes the physical aspects of the landform, including its general size, shape, and location on the surface of the planet, if applicable. A standard definition of the landform opens the discussion. If the landform exists as various types, those types are defined and further described.
- **Forces and changes: Construction and destruction** describes in detail the forces and agents responsible for the construction, evolution, and destruction of the landform. The erosional actions of wind and water, the dynamic movement of crustal plates, the influence of gravity, and the changes in climate both across regions and time are explained in this section, depending on their relation to the specific landform.
- **Spotlight on famous forms** describes specific examples of the landform in question. Many of these examples are well-known; others may not be. The biggest, the highest, and the deepest were not the sole criteria for selection, although many of the featured landforms meet these superlatives. While almost all chapters include examples found in the United States, they also contain examples of landforms found throughout the world.
- **For More Information** offers students further sources for research—books or Web sites—about that particular landform.

Other features include more than 120 color photos and illustrations, “Words to Know” boxes providing definitions of terms used in each chapter, sidebar boxes highlighting interesting facts relating to particular landforms, a general bibliography, and a cumulative index offering easy access to all of the subjects discussed in *U•X•L Encyclopedia of Landforms and Other Geologic Features*.

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Comments and Suggestions

We welcome your comments on *U•X•L Encyclopedia of Landforms and Other Geologic Features*. Please write: Editors, *U•X•L Encyclopedia of Landforms and Other Geologic Features*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48331; call toll-free: 1-800-877-4253; fax: 248-699-8097; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.