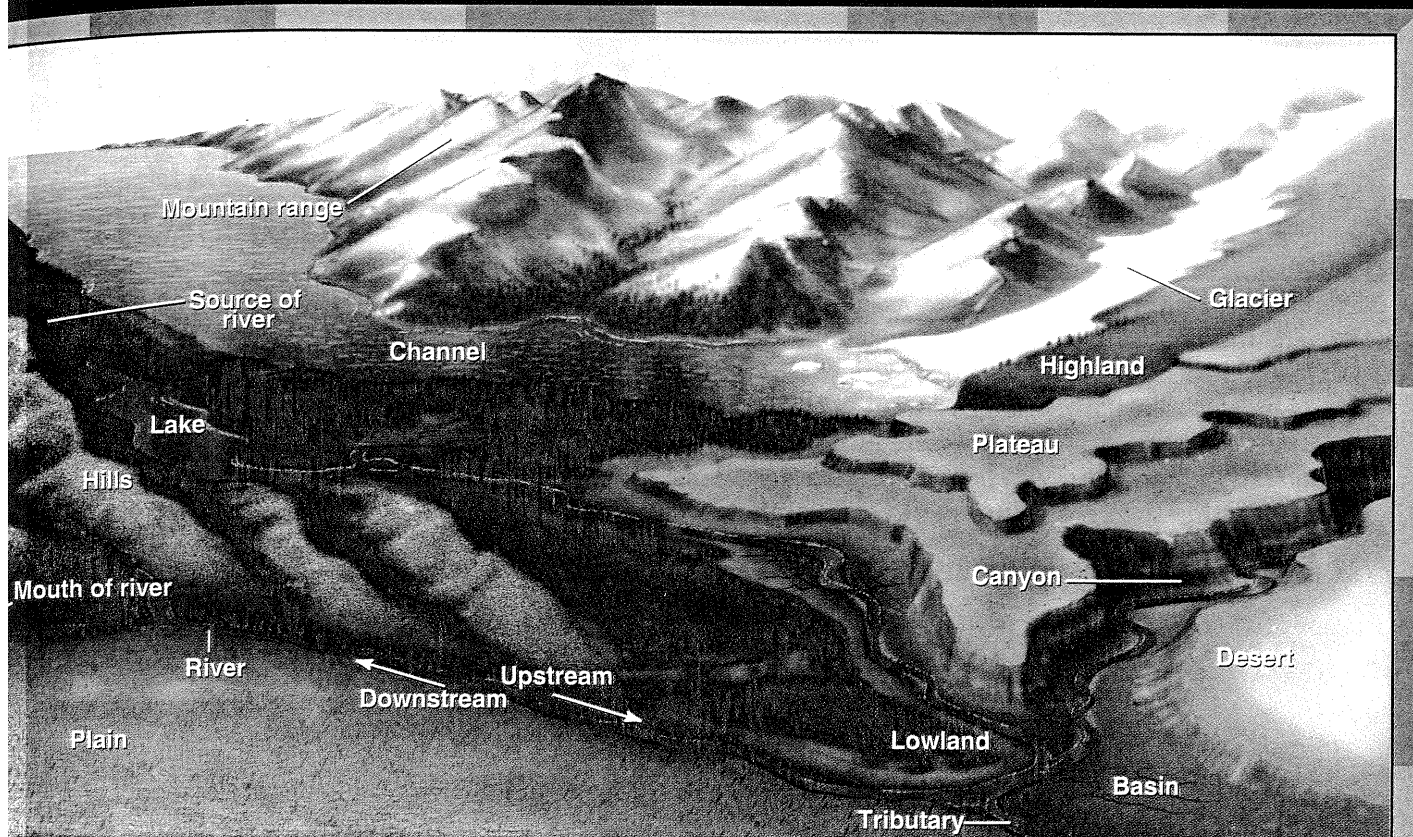


GEOGRAPHIC DICTIONARY

As you read about the world's geography, you will encounter the terms listed below. Many of the terms are pictured in the diagram.

- absolute location** exact location of a place on the Earth described by global coordinates
- basin** area of land drained by a given river and its branches; area of land surrounded by lands of higher elevations
- bay** part of a large body of water that extends into a shoreline, generally smaller than a gulf
- canyon** deep and narrow valley with steep walls
- cape** point of land that extends into a river, lake, or ocean
- channel** wide strait or waterway between two landmasses that lie close to each other; deep part of a river or other waterway
- cliff** steep, high wall of rock, earth, or ice
- continent** one of the seven large landmasses on the Earth
- delta** flat, low-lying land built up from soil carried downstream by a river and deposited at its mouth

- divide** stretch of high land that separates river systems
- downstream** direction in which a river or stream flows from its source to its mouth
- elevation** height of land above sea level
- Equator** imaginary line that runs around the Earth halfway between the North and South Poles; used as the starting point to measure degrees of north and south latitude
- glacier** large, thick body of slowly moving ice
- gulf** part of a large body of water that extends into a shoreline, generally larger and more deeply indented than a bay
- harbor** a sheltered place along a shoreline where ships can anchor safely
- highland** elevated land area such as a hill, mountain, or plateau
- hill** elevated land with sloping sides and rounded summit; generally smaller than a mountain
- island** land area, smaller than a continent, completely surrounded by water
- isthmus** narrow stretch of land connecting two larger land areas
- lake** a sizable inland body of water
- latitude** distance north or south of the Equator, measured in degrees
- longitude** distance east or west of the Prime Meridian, measured in degrees
- lowland** land, usually level, at a low elevation



map drawing of the Earth shown on a flat surface

meridian one of many lines on the global grid running from the North Pole to the South Pole; used to measure degrees of longitude

mesa broad, flat-topped landform with steep sides; smaller than a plateau

mountain land with steep sides that rises sharply (1,000 feet or more) from surrounding land; generally larger and more rugged than a hill

mountain peak pointed top of a mountain

mountain range a series of connected mountains

mouth (of a river) place where a stream or river flows into a larger body of water

ocean one of the four major bodies of salt water that surround the continents

ocean current stream of either cold or warm water that moves in a definite direction through an ocean

parallel one of many lines on the global grid that circles the Earth north or south of the Equator; used to measure degrees of latitude

peninsula body of land jutting into a lake or ocean, surrounded on three sides by water

physical feature characteristic of a place occurring naturally, such as a landform, body of water, climate pattern, or resource

plain area of level land, usually at low elevation and often covered with grasses

plateau area of flat or rolling land at a high elevation, about 300 to 3,000 feet (90 to 900 m) high

Prime Meridian line of the global grid running from the North Pole to the South Pole at Greenwich, England; starting point for measuring degrees of east and west longitude

relief changes in elevation over a given area of land

river large natural stream of water that runs through the land

sea large body of water completely or partly surrounded by land

seacoast land lying next to a sea or an ocean

sound broad inland body of water, often between a coastline and one or more islands off the coast

source (of a river) place where a river or stream begins, often in highlands

strait narrow stretch of water joining two larger bodies of water

tributary small river or stream that flows into a large river or stream; a branch of the river

upstream direction opposite the flow of a river; toward the source of a river or stream

valley area of low land usually between hills or mountains

volcano mountain or hill created as liquid rock and ash erupt from inside the Earth