

# Geographic Terms

These are useful terms for study of ecology, archeology, geography, climatology, and geology. Clicking on each underlined term will take you to a pertinent website on the Internet featuring a wealth of useful related information on each topic.

<b>Alluvial fan</b>	A broad, circular fan-shaped deposit of sediments found in areas where erosional stream channels meet the valley floor and spread out, depositing the stream load
<b>Aquifer</b>	An underground reservoir of water which can be extracted for surface use
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The number of species present in a given ecosystem
<b><u>Climate</u></b>	The long term trends in weather conditions for an area
<b>Climatology</b>	The study of the climates of the earth
<b><u>Desert</u></b>	An area with little precipitation or where evaporation exceeds precipitation, and thus includes sparse vegetation
<b><u>Ecology</u></b>	The study of the interrelationships between life forms and their environment
<b><u>Erosion</u></b>	Forces of wind water or ice that shape the earth's surface.
<b>Floodplain</b>	A flat, low-lying area near a river or stream which is subject to flooding
<b>Flora</b>	Plant life
<b><u>Geologic time</u></b>	Eras in the formation of the earth since it first appeared about 4.6 billion years ago
<b><u>Geology</u></b>	The study of the earth's crust, strata, origin of rocks, etc.
<b><u>Glacier</u></b>	A large mass of ice that moves over the land, carving and eroding surfaces as it moves
<b><u>Global warming</u></b>	The theory that temperature of the atmosphere an increasing due to the increase in gasses such as carbon dioxide

<b>Greenhouse effect</b>	The analogy used to describe the ability of gasses in the atmosphere to absorb heat from the earth's surface
<b><u>Hydrologic cycle</u></b>	The circulation of water between the atmosphere, streams and land, the ocean, and back to the atmosphere
<b><u>Map</u></b>	A graphic representation of the earth's surface
<b>Mass wasting</b>	The (rapid and spontaneous) downward movement of rock material cause by gravity but often helped by water
<b><u>Meteorology</u></b>	The scientific study of the atmosphere
<b><u>Natural hazard</u></b>	A physical event which destroys life and/or property, such as hurricanes, tornados, and floods
<b><u>Physical geography</u></b>	The branch of geography dealing with the natural features of the earth
<b><u>Precipitation</u></b>	Any form of water that falls from the atmosphere to the surface of the earth (e.g. rain, snow, sleet, and hail)
<b><u>Region</u></b>	An area which is marked by common physical, cultural, ecological, or other characteristics
<b>Secondary activity</b>	The conversion of raw material into a product
<b>Sustainable development</b>	Development that does not exploit resources more rapidly than the renewal of those resources.
<b><u>Topographic map</u></b>	A detailed contour map showing physical elevations