

Vocabulary

Study the vocabulary words and definitions below.

abyssal plains large, flat regions deep on the ocean floor

canyons deep V-shaped valleys found along the continental slope

continental drift a hypothesis suggesting that the continents have moved and been in different positions through geologic time

continental shelf relatively flat part of the continent that is covered by seawater; lies between the coast and the continental slope

continental slope the steeply dipping surface between the outer edge of the continental shelf and the ocean basin proper

continents the seven major landmasses found on the surface of Earth

convection currents the circular movements of heat through liquids or gases

core the innermost layer of Earth which has two parts—the *outer* portion which is liquid and the *inner* portion which is solid

Vocabulary

- crust** the outer layer of Earth
- earthquake** a sudden movement of Earth's crust
- epicenter** the point on the surface of Earth directly above the focus of an earthquake
- fault** a break in Earth's surface along which movement has occurred
- focus** the true center of an earthquake below Earth's surface
- guyots** (GEE-oze)..... underwater volcanic mountains with flat tops
- lava**..... melted rock (magma) that comes to the surface of Earth
- lithosphere** the rigid outer layer of Earth, including the crust and upper mantle
- magma**..... melted (hot liquid) rock found inside Earth
- mantle** the molten layer of Earth below the crust
- mid-ocean ridge** mountain chain that rises from the ocean basins

Vocabulary

- Pangaea** (pan-JEE-uh)..... the large landmass that broke up and drifted to form our present day continents
- plates** pieces of Earth's crust that move about on the mantle
- plate tectonics** theory stating that crustal plates on the surface of Earth are continuously moving due to convection currents
- Richter scale** scale used to describe the strength of an earthquake
- rift** a wide valley that separates two parallel chains of underwater mountains
- Ring of Fire** major earthquake zone that forms a ring around the Pacific Ocean; includes the western coasts of North America and South America and the eastern coast of Asia
- seamounts** underwater cone-shaped volcanic mountains
- seismic waves** waves by which energy moves away from the focus of an earthquake in all directions from the center
- seismograph** an instrument used to measure earthquake activity
- seismologist** a person who studies earthquakes

Vocabulary

trenches long, narrow cracks in the ocean floor that are the deepest parts of the ocean

volcano a vent in Earth's crust through which hot, liquid rock erupts or oozes; a mountain formed of lava