

Vocabulary

Study the vocabulary words and definitions below.

- continental slope** the sloping surface between the outer edge of the continental shelf and the ocean basin
- convection current** the movement of a substance caused by differences in its temperature
- Coriolis effect** the result of the Earth's rotation, causing a water mass or moving object to flow to the right in the Northern Hemisphere (clockwise) and to the left in the Southern Hemisphere (counterclockwise)
- course** path or direction
- current** movement of water caused by uneven temperatures or winds
- equatorial currents** warm-water currents that flow away from the equator
- Gulf Stream** warm-water current that flows from the Gulf of Mexico, around Florida, and up the East Coast of North America
- gyres** circular or spiral patterns; refers to circular motion of major ocean currents
- hemisphere** half of a sphere (ball or globe)
- longshore current** current located in the surf zone, running parallel to the shore as a result of waves breaking at an angle on the shore

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polar currents cold-water currents that flow toward the equator

reversing current the current as it meets land and moves back into the ocean

rip current strong, narrow current at or near the surface of the shoreline flowing back toward sea

trade winds powerful winds produced by the Earth's rotation; movement of air toward the equator, from the northeast in the Northern Hemisphere and southeast in the Southern Hemisphere

turbidity current strong, underwater current of water, sand, and silt that erodes the ocean bottom

upwelling process by which deep, cold, nutrient-rich water is brought to the surface, usually by water currents or winds that pull water away from the coast