



Geography Terminology

Key Concepts

Term	Meaning
Sustainability	Taking care of the Earth so that it stays healthy for a long time.

Foundation Stage

Term	Meaning	Example
Seasons	Seasons are changes in the weather where we live, caused by the Earth being closer to or further away from the Sun. There are four seasons in a year in the UK; spring, summer, autumn and winter.	
Autumn	Autumn is when it starts to get cooler and less sunny. There are gradually less hours of daylight. In the UK, the autumn months are September, October, November.	
Spring	Spring is when Earth starts to warm up and plants start to grow. In the UK, the spring months are March, April, May.	
Summer	Summer is when the sun shines more and for longer. In the UK, the summer months are June, July, August.	
Winter	Winter is when the days get shorter and the weather is colder. In the UK, the winter months are December, January, February	
Weather	The conditions in the air, in a particular place, such as wind, rain, or temperature.	
Fog	Fog is the same as cloud but on the surface of the ground. Fog makes it difficult to see very far ahead.	
Frost	Frost is white ice crystals that cover surfaces, such as grass or roofs.	
Rain	Rain is drops of water that fall to the Earth from clouds in the sky.	

Rainbows	Rainbows are arcs of colour in the sky. When the sun shines through rain we get rainbows. The seven colours of the rainbow are, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet	
Snow	Snow is a number of ice crystals joined together. Snowflakes are white because they reflect sunlight (which is white).	
Wind	Wind is air moving around	
Map	A map is a drawing or picture showing selected features of an area	
House	A building where people live	
Shop	A building or part of a building where goods or services are sold	
School	A building or place where children go to be educated.	Asquith Primary School
Road	A hard surface built for vehicles to travel along	

Year 1

Term	Meaning	Example
The North Sea	Sea located between the British Isles and northwestern Europe	
The English Channel	A strip of the Atlantic Ocean between southeast England and northwest France.	
Irish Sea	A strip of the Atlantic Ocean that separates Ireland from Great Britain.	
Weather Patterns	The weather conditions over a specified period of time	
journey	Traveling from one place to another	From home to school
Physical features	Features in the environment that are natural and would be there even if people didn't exist	Trees, mountains, rivers
Human features	Features in the environment that have been built by people (man-made)	Roads, buildings, bridges
Bungalow	A house with only one story (level)	
Terraced house	A house built as part of a continuous row	



Semi-detached house	A house that shares one common wall with the next house	
Detached house	A house that is not joined to any other house	
River	A large, natural stream of flowing water	
Mountain	A land mass with great height and steep sides that is higher than a hill	Mount Everest, Mount Etna

Year 2

Term	Meaning	Example
Continent	One of the seven large land masses on Earth's surface	Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Oceania/Australia
Ocean	A huge body of saltwater that covers much of Earth's surface	
Equator	An imaginary line around the middle of a planet. It is halfway between the north pole and the south pole	
North Pole	The northernmost point on Earth	
South Pole	The southernmost point on Earth	
Globe	A three-dimensional scale model of the Earth	
Map symbols	Simple images, letters and abbreviations used to represent a real-world feature on a map	 river  Sch school  wood
Map key	Explains what the various symbols represent and gives the scale of the map.	
Compass	A device that indicates direction. The magnetised needle rotates so that it lines up with the Earth's magnetic field, pointing to magnetic north.	
Landscape	Everything that you can see when you look across an area of land, including hills, rivers, buildings, and trees.	

Cliff	A mass of rock that rises very high and is almost vertical, or straight up-and-down	
Coast	The land along a sea. The Coastline is where the land meets the sea	
Mountain range	A series of mountains that are close together	The Alps
River	A large, natural stream of flowing water	
Valley	A long low area of land. It usually lies between ranges of hills or mountains	
Vegetation	The plant life present in a region	
City	A busy settlement where people live and work. A city generally has a population over 100,000 or it has a Cathedral.	London, Nottingham, Lincoln
Town	A settlement with a large range of services. Towns usually have a population between 10,000 and 100,000.	Mansfield, Newark, Grantham
Village	A small settlement with a few services often a pub, school, church or post office. Villages generally have a population between 500 and 3,000.	Papplewick, Edwinstowe
Port	A landing place for ships to load and unload their cargo and passengers	
Harbour	A deep body of water sheltered by natural or artificial barriers. Harbors can provide safe anchorage permitting the transfer of cargo and passengers between ships and the shore	
Meteorology	The study of the atmosphere and all its elements, including weather and how to forecast it.	
Rain Gauge	An instrument, often sunk into the ground, used for measuring precipitation.	
Temperature	Temperature is a measure of how hot or cold it is. Thermometers are used to measure the temperature.	
Wind Vane	An instrument for showing the direction of the wind.	

Year 3/4

Term	Meaning	Example
------	---------	---------



Volcano	A volcano is a feature in the Earth's crust where molten rock and gases erupt from the below the Earth's surface	Mount Etna, Mount Vesuvius
Active volcano	One with a recent history of eruption; they are likely to erupt again	
Dormant volcano	Have not erupted for a very long time but may erupt in the future	
Extinct volcano	Are not expected to erupt in the future.	
Volcanic Eruption	The escape of gases, steam and lava from a volcano.	
Eruption Cloud	A mixture of gases, ash and rock emitted from a volcano during a volcanic eruption.	
Volcanic Ash	A mixture of rock, minerals and glass particles expelled from a volcano during a volcanic	
Magma	Extremely hot liquid and semi-liquid rock located under the Earth's surface	
Lava	Extremely hot liquid or semi-liquid rock expelled by a volcano during an eruption. Once Magma flows onto the surface it is known as lava.	
Magma chamber	The location beneath the vent of a volcano where molten rock (magma) is stored.	
Vent	The channel through which magma travels to reach the Earth's surface	
Crater	The top of the volcano where magma erupts from.	
Mountain Base	The bottom of the mountain where it meets flat ground	
Ridge	A raised area of the land that is generally narrow and long	
Peak	Highest point of the mountain. Also known as the summit	
Summit	Highest point of the mountain. Also known as the peak	
Altitude	The height of a point above sea level	
Water Cycle	Describes how water moves through Earth's land, ocean, and atmosphere.	
River source	The start of a river	



River mouth	Where a river flows into a larger body of water, such as another river, a lake/reservoir, a bay/gulf, a sea, or an ocean.	
Evaporation	The process that changes liquid water to water vapor. Water heated by the sun turns into vapour — tiny droplets of water which float on the air.	A puddle dries up because the water turns to vapour
Condensation	The process by which water vapour cools and turns into a liquid	
Precipitation	Moisture that falls from the sky, usually in the form of rain or snow	Rain, hail, snow
Run off	Water flowing across the surface of the Earth.	
Ground Water	Water that has infiltrated the ground	
Rural Areas	An open area of land, located outside of cities and towns, that has few houses or other buildings	Peak District
Urban Area	An area of dense population, lots of buildings and greater economic dependence on trade rather than agriculture or fishing	Mansfield, Nottingham
Settlement	A location where people have built structures and formed communities	
Hamlet	A very small settlement with no services, no central place of worship and no meeting point. It can be a group of houses dispersed in the countryside or running along a road	
Cartography	The study and practice of making maps	
Ordinance Survey	Great Britain's national mapping agency. They create paper and digital maps that show physical and human features as symbols	
Grid references	Describing a location using intersecting vertical and horizontal grid lines, indicated by numbers and/or letters	

Year 5/6

Term	Meaning	Example
Latitude	An imaginary line running east to west around the Earth signifying how far north or south a place is from the Equator.	



Longitude	An imaginary line running north to south around the Earth signifying how far east or west a place is from the Greenwich Meridian.	
Northern Hemisphere	The half of the Earth that is north of the Equator	
Southern Hemisphere	The area of the Earth that is south of the Equator	
Tropic of Cancer	Line of latitude 23.5 degrees north of the Equator	
Tropic of Capricorn	Line of latitude 23.5 degrees south of the Equator	
Arctic circle	Line of latitude that runs 66.5 degrees north of the Equator	
Antarctic circle	Line of latitude that runs 66.5 degrees south of the Equator	
Prime meridian	The line of 0° longitude. There is an international agreement that the meridian runs through Greenwich, England so this is considered the official prime meridian.	
Time zones	The world is split into 24 times zones, using imaginary lines called meridians which run from the north pole to the south pole.	
Time zone	A region of the Earth that uses the same standard time	
Earthquake	The sudden shaking and vibration of the Earth's crust caused by movement of the tectonic plates	
Epicentre	The point on the Earth's surface directly above the focus of an Earthquake	
Magnitude	An expression of the total energy released by an Earthquake.	
The Richter Scale	measures the magnitude of an Earthquake	
Earth's crust	The solid, outer layer of the Earth	
Tectonic Plates	Enormous sections of the Earth's crust that roughly fit together and meet at places called plate boundaries	
Biome	A climatic zone of the Earth that is associated with a particular ecosystem.	
Climate	The average weather conditions of a particular place over a 30 year period	
Climate Change	a long-term shift in global or regional climate patterns	



Climate Zone	Areas with distinct climates	
Tributary	A stream that feeds into a larger stream or river	
Meandor	A large curve in a stream or river	
Oxbow Lake	A U-shaped lake or pool that forms when a wide meander of a river is cut off, creating a free-standing body of water	
Map Scale	The ratio of a distance on Earth compared to the same distance on a map	
Economy	The system of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services	
Economic Activity	The amount a country sells and makes is called economic activity	
Fossil fuels	Fuel that is formed in the earth from plant or animal remains.	Oil, coal, natural gas
Renewable Energy	Energy from natural sources which won't run out. such as	wind, solar, geothermal
Sustainable	Meeting present needs without preventing future generations from meeting their needs.	