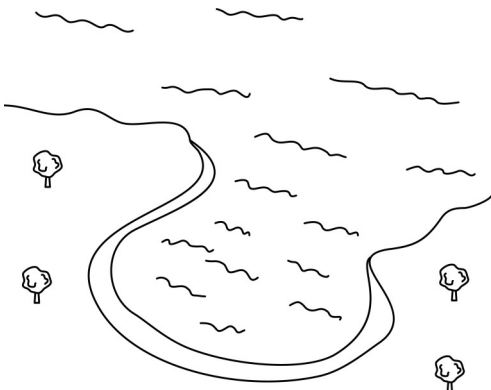


# Exploring the Earth's Landforms

What is a **landform**? A landform is anything distinctive about the surface of a planet, moon, or asteroid that happens naturally. In other words, it's not something manmade but something that happens as a result of things such as erosion, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, the movement of glaciers, the action of rivers, etc. There are many different types of landforms, but we're going to look at some of the ones most common on Earth and see how we can tell some of them apart.



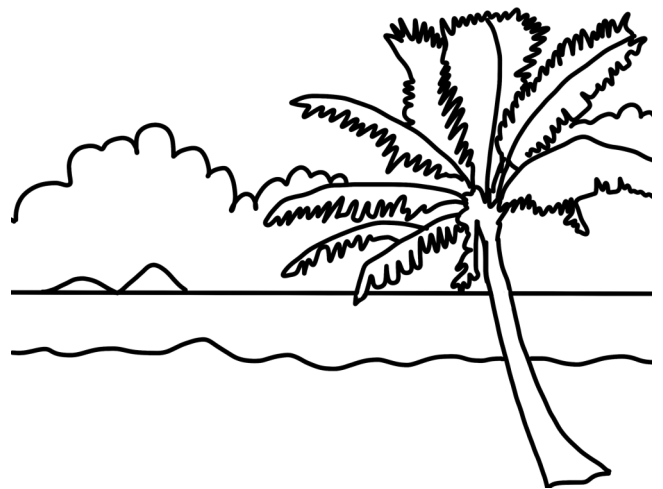
Landforms



A **bay** is a body of water, smaller than a gulf, that is partially surrounded by land. There are bays in every part of the world, such as the Bay of Bengal in Asia, the Hudson Bay in North America, and the Bay of Biscay in Europe. A bay in Russia near Lake Baikal, called Provo Bay, was created in 1862 by an earthquake that hit the region.

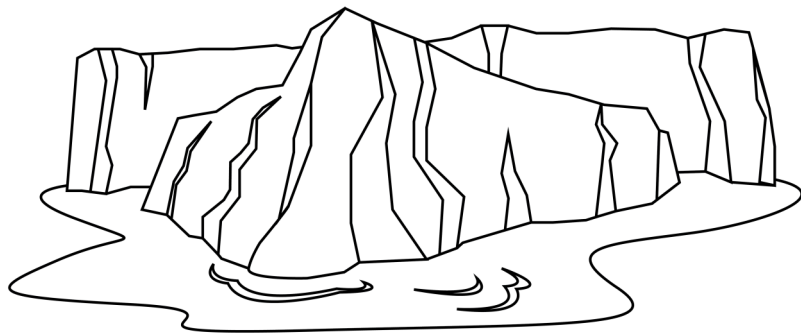
Bay

You can find a **beach** anywhere you find sand, pebbles, or rocks along the shoreline where water meets land. A beach can be warm and tropical, like the beaches of Caribbean islands or Australia, or they can be along the frigid waters of the Arctic Ocean like Barrow Beach in Alaska in the United States.

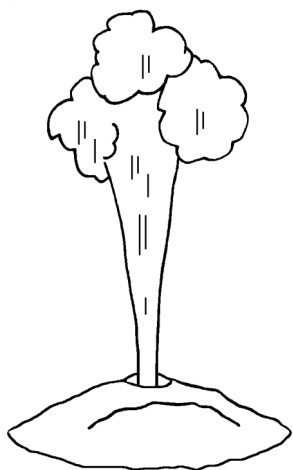


Beach

**Glaciers** are tremendously large pieces of ice that slide and move because of the pull of gravity. As they slide down hills and valleys, they flatten some landforms and create new ones.



Glacier



A **geyser** is a spring that shoots hot water, often in a great stream that can be more than 100 feet (30 meters) high, though some only bubble a little at the surface. There are geysers in different parts of the world. There are at least 300 active geysers in Yellowstone Park in the United States alone. There is a group of geysers in barren lava fields 7 miles (110 kilometers) from Reykjavik, Iceland, and there is another group of geysers in New Zealand.

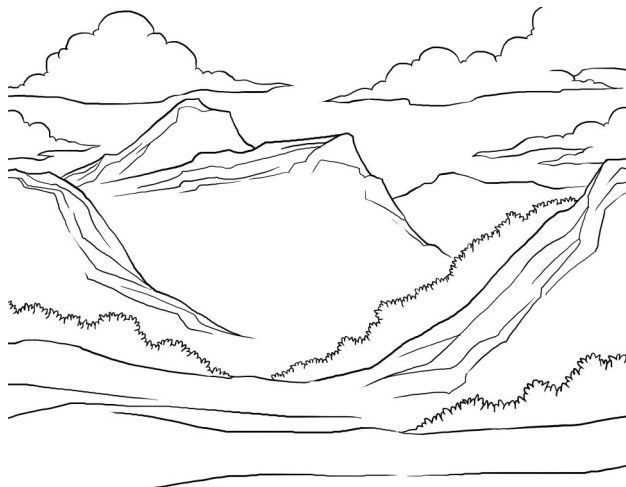
Geyser

A **gorge** is similar to a canyon in that it is usually a valley surrounded by steep and rocky sides, but gorges are narrow and usually have a stream flowing through them. Sometimes the words are used interchangeably, meaning that some people call the same landform a canyon or a gorge. You can find gorges all over the world. Murchison Gorge is located in Western Australia, Torssachs is a gorge found in Scotland, and the Delaware Water Gap is a gorge in the northeastern United States.

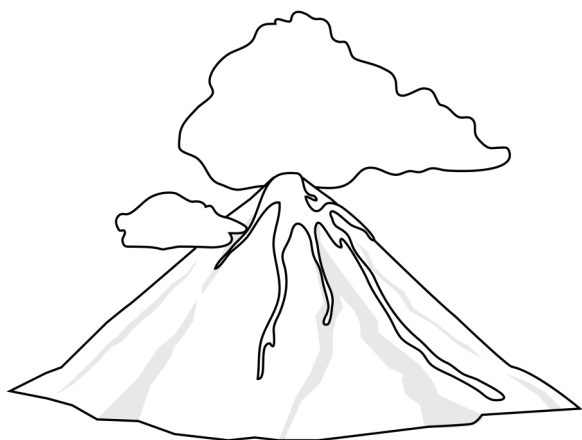


Gorge

A **valley** is a natural dip in the Earth's surface. Many valleys pass between hills or mountains. Often times, the bottom of the valley, called the floor, has soil that is excellent for growing things. Just like hills and mountains, you can find valleys in all parts of the world, such as the Shenandoah Valley in the United States, the Great Rift Valley in Africa, and the Swat, a valley in Pakistan in Asia.



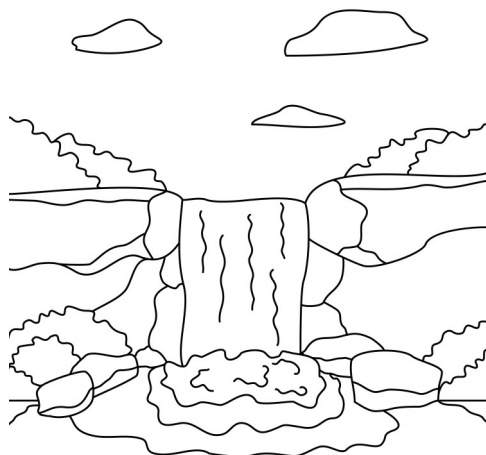
Valley



Volcano

A **volcano** is an opening in the earth's crust at the top of, or sometimes on the sides of, a mountain or hill. Volcanoes are known for their eruptions of lava, ash, rocks, and gases. They can be various shapes and sizes. Shield volcanoes, like Mauna Loa in Hawaii, are some of the largest in the world. Other volcanoes are cone-shaped and include volcanoes like Krakatau in Indonesia, Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, and Vesuvius in Italy.

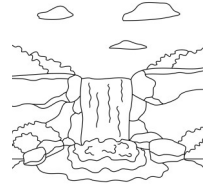
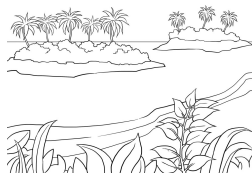
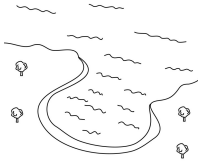
A **waterfall** is a flow of water from a steep, high place. Waterfalls happen all over the world. The highest waterfall is Angel Falls in Venezuela. It stands 3,212 feet (979 meters) tall. The waterfall with the largest amount of water is Victoria Falls in Africa, on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Jog Falls in India cascades over one cliff and then break into four smaller waterfalls.



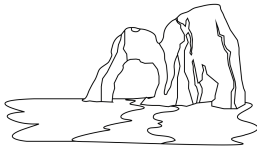
Waterfall

## Review

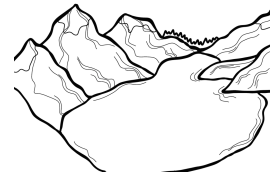
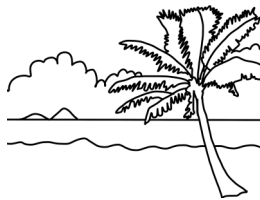
Which of the following is a bay? Draw a circle around it.



Which of the following is a mesa? Draw a circle around it.



Which of the following is a delta? Draw a circle around it.



Which of the following is a plateau? Draw a circle around it.

