

GEOGRAPHY · Y3–Y6

Coasts

Knowledge Organiser — Y3–Y6

Key processes

1

Erosion

The wearing away of rock by waves, chemical action, and abrasion. Breaks down cliffs and coastlines.

2

Deposition

When waves drop material (sand, pebbles) they've been carrying. Creates beaches and spits.

3

Transportation

The movement of material along the coast by waves. Longshore drift moves material sideways along the beach.

4

Hydraulic action

Waves force water and air into cracks in rock, widening them.

5

Abrasion

Rocks and pebbles carried by waves grind against the cliff face, wearing it away.

6

Longshore drift

Sediment (sand and pebbles) moves along the coast in the direction of the prevailing wind/waves, in a zigzag pattern.

Coastal landforms



1

Cliff

A steep rock face formed by erosion. The base is undercut by waves until the top collapses.

Example: Seven Sisters, East Sussex

2

Wave-cut platform

A flat area of rock at the base of a cliff, left as the cliff retreats.

3

Cave → arch → stack → stump

The sequence of erosion features: crack → cave → arch (hole through headland) → stack (pillar) → stump.

Example: Old Harry Rocks, Dorset

4

Beach

An area of sand or pebbles formed by deposition.

Example: Chesil Beach, Dorset

5

Spit

A narrow ridge of sand or pebbles extending into the sea, formed by longshore drift.

Example: Spurn Head, East Yorkshire

6

Bar

A spit that has grown all the way across a bay, creating a lagoon behind it.

Example: Slapton Ley, Devon

