

GEOGRAPHY · GRADES 3–5

Rivers, Mountains & Coasts

Geographical vocabulary

River vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Example
Source	Where a river starts	The Nile starts in Lake Victoria
Mouth	Where a river meets the sea	The Thames meets the sea at the estuary
Tributary	A smaller river that joins a bigger one	The Cherwell is a tributary of the Thames
Meander	A bend in a river	The Mississippi has huge meanders
Estuary	Where river meets sea, water mixes	The Severn Estuary
Delta	Triangle of land where river splits at sea	The Nile Delta in Egypt
Bank	The land along the side of a river	Children fished from the river bank
Confluence	Where two rivers meet and join	The confluence of the Rhine and Mosel

Mountain vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Example
Summit	The very top of a mountain	The summit of Everest is 8,849m



Word	Meaning	Example
Peak	Pointed top of a mountain	The peak of the Matterhorn
Range	A line of mountains	The Himalaya range
Valley	Low ground between hills or mountains	The Rhône valley in France
Ridge	Long, narrow mountain top	The ridge between two summits
Glacier	A slow-moving river of ice	The Aletsch Glacier in Switzerland
Foothills	Lower hills at base of a mountain	The Himalayan foothills

Coast vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Example
Coast	Where land meets sea	The Cornish coast
Bay	A curved indent in the coast	The Bay of Bengal
Cliff	A steep, high rock face on a coast	The white cliffs of Dover
Beach	Sand or shingle on a coast	Bondi Beach in Australia
Peninsula	Land surrounded by sea on three sides	Italy is a peninsula
Island	Land surrounded by sea on all sides	Madagascar is an island
Cape	A pointy bit of coast jutting into sea	Cape Town, Cape Cod
Lagoon	Shallow water cut off from the sea	The Venice Lagoon



Vocabulary in use

Pick five new words above. For each, write a sentence using it correctly. Try to use a real place where you can.

