

# Glossary

**agriculture** (n.) The practice of growing crops and raising animals for food, fiber, or other use by humans

**alluvial soil** (n.) Sand, silt, clay, gravel, or other matter deposited by flowing water, such as a stream

**aqueduct** (n.) An artificial channel for moving a large quantity of flowing water

**aquifer** (n.) An underground layer of rock or sediment that holds usable amounts of groundwater

**arid** (adj.) Very dry; not having enough rainfall to support much natural vegetation or agriculture

**atmosphere** (n.) The air surrounding and bound to Earth

**basin** (n.) A hollow or depression in the Earth's surface that holds or can hold water; an area of land that shares a common drainage system

**bay** (n.) An inlet of a body of water, such as a sea, that is usually smaller than a gulf

**biodiversity** (n.) The variety of plant and animal species existing within a location or region

**border** (n.) A boundary, especially of a county, state, or country

**canal** (n.) A structure through which water flows from one point to another for irrigation or transportation purposes

**census** (n.) An official count of all the people in a particular place, often a country

**climate** (n.) The average weather conditions of a particular place or region over a long period of time

**delta** (n.) A piece of land created at the mouth of a river through deposition of sediments; can take characteristic shapes such as triangle, fan, or bird's foot

**desert** (n.) Dry land with little rainfall and few plants

**elevation** (n.) Height above sea level

**Equator** (n.) An imaginary circle around the Earth that is at every point equal distance from the North and South Poles

**ethnic** (adj.) Sharing distinctive cultural traits as a group

**erode** (v.) To gradually wear away

**evaporate** (v.) When a liquid changes to a vapor; removing moisture

**expedition** (n.) A journey or trip undertaken for a specific purpose, such as exploring or research

**export** (v.) To send to another country; (n.) an item sold in another country

**fog** (n.) Fine particles of water floating in the atmosphere near the ground

**foothill** (n.) A hill at the base of higher mountains

**freshwater** (n.) Water from precipitation and aquifers that flows in rivers, lakes, and other water ecosystems

**glacier** (n.) A large body of ice moving slowly down a slope or spreading outward over a land surface

**granite** (n.) A very hard rock that can be polished and used in buildings and monuments

**grasslands** (n.) Land covered by herbs (grasses and clover) rather than shrubs and trees

**groundwater** (n.) Water within the Earth that supplies wells and springs

**gulf** (n.) A part of an ocean or sea extending into the land

**headland** (n.) A point of land rising above the sea; a cliff

**hemisphere** (n.) One half of the Earth as divided by the Equator or a meridian

**hydrology** (n.) Movement, distribution, and characteristics of water on and below the surface of the land and in the atmosphere

**immigrant** (n.) A person who comes to a country to live there

**indigenous** (adj.) Native to a certain region or country

**interior** (n.) The inland part of a state or country

**irrigation** (n.) A system that supplies water to land through pipes, canals, aqueducts, or other means

**isthmus** (n.) A narrow strip of land connecting two larger land areas

**lagoon** (n.) A shallow channel or pond near or connected to a larger body of water

**landscape** (n.) The land that can be seen at one glance

**latitude** (n.) A measure of distance north or south of the Equator on Earth

**longitude** (n.) A measure of distance east or west from the Prime Meridian on Earth

**marsh/marshland** (n.) An area of saturated land usually comprising a mixture of grasses and open water

**migrate** (v.) To move from one place to another; to move seasonally between regions and climate zones, usually for feeding or breeding purposes

**mineral** (n.) A naturally occurring substance obtained usually from the ground

**mountain range** (n.) A series of peaks and/or ridges that are alike in form and origin

**orient** (v.) To set or arrange in a definite position, especially in relation to the points of the compass

**Pacific Rim** (n.) The countries bordering on or located in the Pacific Ocean

**peninsula** (n.) A piece of land nearly surrounded by water but connected to a larger land mass

**plain** (n.) A broad area of level or rolling and often treeless land

**plateau** (n.) A broad, flat area of elevated land

**physiography** (n.) A description of the features and changes of the Earth's surface, often specific to a place or region

**populated** (adj.) Serving as home to people

**population** (n.) The whole number of people living in a place or region

**precipitation** (n.) Water, or the amount of water, that falls to the Earth as rain, snow, or in another form

**pueblo** (n.) Land set aside by Spanish and Mexican rulers for settlers to establish farms and towns

**rancheria** (n.) American Indian settlement established by the U.S. government

**rancho** (n.) Land granted by Spanish and Mexican rulers for settlers to farm and raise livestock

**region** (n.) An area with common features or interconnections that set it apart from other areas

**reservation** (n.) An area of public lands reserved for a special use, such as land set aside for Native American communities

**reservoir** (n.) An artificial or natural lake used to collect water and provide a reliable supply

**riparian** (adj.) Pertaining to or situated along the banks of a river or stream

**river** (n.) A natural body of running water that is usually larger than a stream or creek and flows into an ocean, lake, or another river

**rural** (adj.) In or relating to an area of low and dispersed population

**sediment** (n.) Matter (such as sand or clay) deposited by water or wind

**snowpack** (n.) Snow that accumulates during a season

**stream** (n.) A body of running water smaller than a river; similar to a creek or brook

**suburb** (n.) A community close to a city

**survey** (v.) To find out the size, position, and characteristics of a piece of land

**swamp** (n.) Wet, spongy land often partly covered with water

**terrain** (n.) The surface features of land

**topography** (n.) The physical features and characteristics of an area of land

**urban** (adj.) Pertaining to or associated with a city

**vegetation** (n.) Plant life

**volcano** (n.) An opening in the Earth's crust through which molten rock, steam, and gases may come out of the Earth

**watershed** (n.) The area of land that drains into a common river or lake

**wetland** (n.) Land covered part of the time by fresh or saltwater, such as a swamp or marsh

**woodlands** (n.) Land covered with trees and shrubs

# Credits

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