



The Shape of the Land

Have you ever flown in a plane? You can see the land below. It is not all the same. You can see different shapes. There are high places and low places. You might see water. We call these landforms.

Glaciers are moving sheets of ice. They slide slowly across rock. The ice leaves grooves in the rock.

Weather and water change land. Wind blows across sand. The dunes change shape. The sand has ridges. Water wears away dirt. It wears down rock. Riverbanks get wider. They change shape.

Mountains and hills are common landforms. Some mountains have flat tops. They are mesas. They have steep sides. *Mesa* means table. Some people call these “tablelands.” The western United States has tablelands.



A valley lies between two mountains. A canyon is a deep valley. It is narrow. There is a river at the bottom. It has steep sides. The Grand Canyon is in Arizona. The steep rock sides form cliffs.

Rivers flow through most valleys. Some valleys are dry. They might have a gulch. A gulch fills with water only when it rains. Other valleys have mighty rivers. The Columbia River has a lot of water. It has

cut a gorge. A gorge is a deep valley. It has steep, rocky sides. Some gorges are narrow. Water wears down the rock sides over time.

A volcano is a mountain that changes. It has vents. Steam and lava escape. When it erupts, it affects the land around it. The eruption throws out chunks of rock and ash. Hummocks are low hills. They are made of **debris** from the volcano.

When landforms change, it affects our lives. We study landforms. We want to know how the changes will affect us.



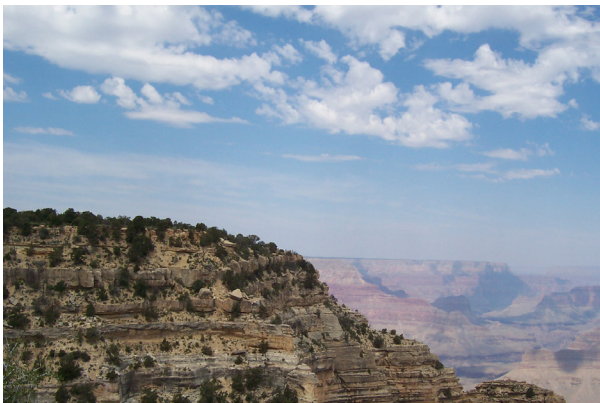
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Have you ever flown in an airplane and looked at the land below? It is not all the same. You can see different shapes. There are high places and low places. You might see water. We call these things landforms.

Glaciers are moving sheets of ice. A glacier slides slowly across rock. It leaves grooves in the rock.

Weather and water change land. Wind blows across the sand. The dunes change shape. The sand has ridges in it. Water wears away dirt and rock. Over time, riverbanks get wider. They change shape.

Mountains, hills, and plains are common landforms. Other landforms we do not hear about as often. A mountain with steep sides and a flat top is a mesa. *Mesa* means table. Some people call this landform “tablelands.” There are tablelands in the western United States.



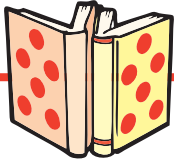
A valley lies between two hills or mountains. A deep, narrow river valley with steep sides is a canyon. The Grand Canyon is in Arizona. The steep rock sides form cliffs.

Most valleys have rivers flowing through them. Some valleys are dry. A gulch fills with water only when it rains. Other valleys have mighty rivers. The Columbia River has a lot of water. It has cut a gorge. A gorge is

a deep valley with steep, rocky sides. Some gorges are very narrow. Water wears down the rock sides over time.

A volcano is a mountain that changes. It has vents. Steam and lava escape. When a volcano erupts, it affects the land around it. The eruption throws out chunks of rock and ash. Hummocks are low hills that are made of **debris** from the volcano.

When landforms change, it makes a difference in our lives. We study landforms to understand how these changes will affect us.



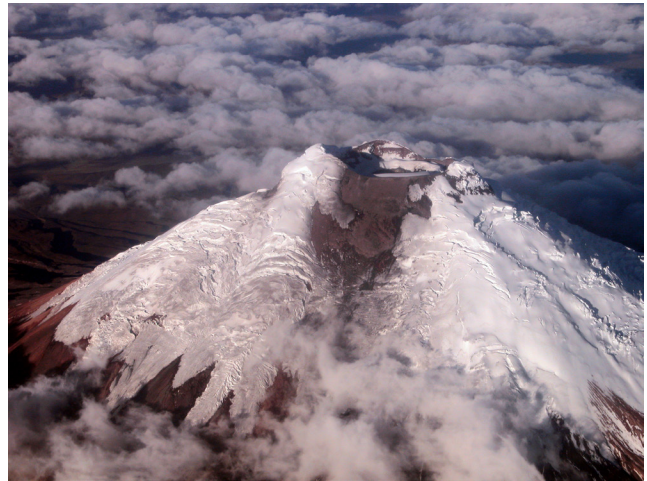
The Shape of the Land

Have you ever flown in an airplane and looked at the land below? It is not all the same. You can see different shapes, high places, and low places. You might see water. We call these things landforms. Each landform has its own characteristics.

Glaciers are moving sheets of ice that slide slowly across rock, leaving ridges or grooves in the land.

Weather and water change land. Wind blows across the sand. The dunes change shape. The sand has ridges in it. Water wears away dirt and rock. Over time, riverbanks get wider or change shape.

Mountains, hills, plains, rivers, and lakes are common landforms. We do not hear about other landforms as often. A hill or a mountain with steep sides and a flat top is a mesa. *Mesa* means table. Some people call this landform “tablelands.” There are tablelands in the western United States.



A valley lies between two hills or mountains. A deep, narrow river valley with steep sides is a canyon. You may have heard of the Grand Canyon in Arizona. The steep rock sides form cliffs.

Most valleys have rivers flowing through them. A gulch is a valley that fills with water only when it rains. Other valleys have mighty rivers. The Columbia River has so much water that it has cut a gorge. A gorge is a deep valley with steep, rocky

sides, worn away over time. Some gorges are very narrow.

A volcano is a mountain that changes. It has vents through which steam and lava escape. When a volcano erupts, it affects the land around it. The eruption throws chunks of rock and ash out of the mountain. Hummocks are low hills that are made of volcanic **debris**.

When landforms change, it affects people’s lives. We study landforms to understand how these changes will affect us.