

Coasts key words

Coastline: Where the land meets the sea.

Tide: How high or low the sea is. It changes during the day.

Wave: The movement of water in the sea.

Beach: The area of sand or pebbles by the sea.

Cliff: A high area of land near the sea, like a big wall of rock.

Erosion: When the sea or wind wears away rocks or land.

Swash: Water that moves up the beach after a wave.

Backwash: Water that goes back to the sea after it hits the beach.

Constructive waves: Waves that build up the beach by adding sand.

Destructive waves: Waves that take away sand or pebbles from the beach.

Longshore drift: The way waves move sand along the beach.

Groyne: A wall built to stop sand from being moved by the sea.

Headland – A point of land that juts out into the sea and is usually made of harder rock.

Bay – A recessed, coastal body of water that directly connects to a larger main body of water.

Cliff – A steep rock face, especially at the edge of the sea.

Wave-cut platform – A flat area found at the base of a sea cliff created by the erosion of waves.

Cave – A hollowed-out area at the base of a cliff formed by erosion.

Arch – A natural opening formed when caves on opposite sides of a headland join.

Stack – A tall, isolated rock column left after an arch collapses.

Stump – The remains of a collapsed sea stack, often submerged at high tide.

Spit – A narrow landform made of sand or shingle that extends from the coast into the sea.

Bar – A ridge of sand or shingle that blocks off a bay, forming a lagoon.

Lagoon – A shallow body of water separated from a larger sea by sandbars or barriers.

Hydraulic action – The force of waves compressing air in cracks, causing the rock to break.

Abrasion – Erosion caused by rocks and pebbles grinding against the cliff face.

Attrition – Rocks and pebbles hitting each other, breaking into smaller, smoother pieces.

Solution – The chemical action of seawater dissolving soluble rocks like limestone.

Weathering – The breaking down of rocks by wind, rain, and biological activity.

Mass movement – The downhill movement of sediment due to gravity.

Longshore drift – The movement of sediment along the coast by wave action.

Sea wall – A concrete wall built to reflect waves and protect the coast.

Groynes – Wooden or stone barriers at right angles to the beach to trap sediment.

Rock armour – Large boulders placed at the base of cliffs to absorb wave energy.

Revetments – Sloping structures placed on banks or cliffs to absorb wave energy.

Beach nourishment – Adding sand or shingle to a beach to make it wider and higher.

Managed retreat – Allowing certain areas of the coast to erode and flood naturally.

Coastal defences – Structures or strategies used to protect the coast from erosion.

Soft engineering – Sustainable, natural methods of coastal management.

Hard engineering – Man-made structures built to control coastal processes.

Sea level rise – The increase in the level of the world's oceans due to climate change.

Climate change – Long-term changes in temperature and weather patterns.

Global warming – The rise in Earth's average surface temperature due to greenhouse gases.

Coastal flooding – Flooding of coastal areas caused by high tides and sea level rise.

Erosion rates – The speed at which land is worn away by natural forces.