

# Terminology - Study of terms and their use

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**Antarctic** – Is that part of the earth which surrounds the South Pole.

**Anticyclone** – The system of winds where the winds below spirally outward from a central region of high pressure towards the low pressure is called anticyclone.

**Apogee** – A heavenly body's point of greatest distance from the earth.

**Arctic** – Is that part of the earth which surrounds the North Pole.

**Artesian Well** – When a permeable rock lies between two impermeable rocks and is open at both ends the rain water enters in at the open end and fills the hole of the permeable rock. If a hole be made through the impermeable rock up to the permeable rock, the water will gush out of hole of itself. Such a boring is called an Artesian Well.

**Asteroids** – Are minor planets. They are small bodies which revolve round the sun between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

**Atoll** – A Coral Reef in the shape of a ring or horse shoe, enclosing a lagoon.

**Aurora Borealis** – Is a phenomenon of light seen in the northern hemisphere. It consists of beams of many colored light quivering in the sky. It is seen in the north of Norway and corresponding latitudes.

**Avalanche** – A heavy mass of snow falling down a hill with great noise.

**Canyon** – Is a gorge, relatively narrow but of considerable size, bounded by steep slopes, usually formed by a river cutting through the soft rocks of an arid region.

**Comets** – Are luminous heavenly bodies moving round the sun. The bright comet contains a nucleus, an enveloping haze and usually a tail of luminous matter.

**Coral reef** – Chain of rocks is lying at or near the sea.

**Coniferous trees** – Are trees which typically bear cones and have needle shaped leaves; e.g. pines, firs etc. Such trees are found mostly in Europe and Canada.

**Deciduous Forests** – Are forests consisting of tree which shed their leaves at a certain period.

**Delta** – Is a triangular shaped land between the distributaries of a river. The Sunderbans is the Delta of the Ganges.

**Doldrums** – a zone of the tropics where calm lasting for some weeks prevails, broken at times by violent winds and storms.

**Ecology** – It is the study of plants, or of animals or of peoples and institutions in relation to environment.

**Epicenter** – (of earthquake) – Is a point at which earthquake breaks out.

**Equator** – Equator is the imaginary circle of the earth every point of which is 90 degrees from earth's pole and dividing the northern from the southern hemisphere. It is from the equator that latitudes of places north and south are reckoned.

**Equigravisphere** – A point in space where the gravity is constant. It is almost a spherical surface round the earth.

**Equinox** – (March 21 Vernal or Spring Equinoxes; September 23. This is autumnal Equinox) when days and nights are equal. This occurs when the sun is vertical over the Equator on these two dates.

**Estuary** – A broad Channel formed by the joining of the sea and river water e.g., Thames Estuary.

**Exosphere** – This is the outermost zone of the atmosphere and begins at about 650 kms above the earth.

**Fog** – It is formed when the water vapor is condensed but remains suspended in air like a cloud close to the surface of the earth.

**Geysers** – These are natural hot water springs.

**Glaciers** – Mass of ice, formed by snow on mountains, moving slowly along a valley.

**Gulf Stream** – Is a warm ocean current emerging from the gulf of Mexico.

**Horse Latitudes** – Belts of calm between regions of the Trade Winds and westerlies of higher latitudes.

**Iceberg** – A mass of land ice broken off from the end of glacier or from an ice barrier, floating on the sea  $\frac{1}{4}$  of which, remains above water, while  $\frac{3}{8}$  portion remains under water.

**Igloo** – Eskimos' home shaped hut or native house made with ice.

**Indian Standard Time** – The Standard Time of India is the local time of a place near Allahabad  $82\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  E – longitude. It is exactly  $5\frac{1}{2}$  hours in advance of the Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

**International Date Line** – The Line approximating to the  $180^{\circ}$  meridian. W. and E. where the date is changed exactly one day as it is crossed. The date is advanced a day when crossing the line going West and back a day when going East.

**Ionosphere** – Ionosphere extends to a height of 80 to 650 kilometers above the earth.

**Isobars** – Are lines on a map joining the places of same barometric pressure.

**Isohel** – Is a line on a map showing the places of equal rainfall.

**Isotherms** – Are lines on a map joining those places which have the same amount of temperature.

**Isthmus** – A narrow strip of land which joins two large land areas or joins a peninsula to the main land e.g. the Isthmus of Panama and the Isthmus of Suez.

**Lagoon** – A stretch of shallow water opening out upon the sea. Venice is built on lagoons.

**Leap Year** â€" A year of 366 days, occurring every fourth year in Christian calendar.

**Magnetosphere** â€" This is the earth's magnetic belt. It extends to about 40,000 miles or some 64,000 km. above the earth.

**Mesosphere** â€" These are shooting stars or solid celestial bodies which become heated and visible as they pass through the atmosphere of the earth.

**Midnight Sun** â€" The sun rises at the North Pole on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March and this Pole remains in night till the 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Thus even at night for some months, the sun is visible near the North Pole. This phenomenon is called Midnight Sun.

**Pampas (in Argentina)** â€" Vast plains stretching from Rio Negro in South to the Gran Chaco in the North and East, from the Andes to the Atlantic, woodless level country. A grassland is known as "Pampas".

**Peninsula** â€" It is a stretch of land almost surrounded by water e.g., Indian Peninsula.

**Perigee** â€" A celestial body's point of lowest distances from the earth.

**Prairies** â€" Extensive treeless tracts situated in Central part of North America, covered with tall gr



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**Quasars** â€" Abbreviated form of Quasi Stellar Radio Sources. They are the most distant celestial bodies which are neither stars nor galaxies, but they are moving away at great speed.

**Rain Shadow** â€" An area which has a relatively small average rainfall because it is sheltered from the prevailing rain-bearing winds by a range of mountains or hills; it is situated on the low side of the range.

**Roaring Forties** â€" Westerly winds blowing throughout the year over the oceans of the southern hemisphere between 40° and 60° south. Being unhindered by land and regular, these winds are extremely tempestuous.

**Sargasso Sea** – It is a part of the North Atlantic between 20° and 35° North latitude and 30° and 70° west longitudes. It is so called on account of quantity of drifting sea weed *Sargassum bacciferum*.

**Satellites** – These are secondary bodies which revolve round a planet as the planets revolve round the sun. The moon is a satellite of the earth.

**Savanna** – A tropical grassland. It is the region bordering the equatorial region in each hemisphere. The Lianos and Pampas of South America and extensive Savannas in Africa are examples.

**Sea of Tranquility** – The place on the moon where astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin landed on July 21, 1969.

**Sedimentary or Stratified rocks** – Are rocks which have been laid down in beds or layers by wind, running water or the sea.

**Sidereal day** – Is the time during which the earth makes a complete revolution of its axis in respect of the fixed stars- being 23 hours 56 minutes and 4.092 seconds.

**Snow line** – The line on a mountain slope which represents the lower limit of perpetual snow – below this line any snow which falls is melted during summer season.

**Solstice** – 21<sup>st</sup> June and 22<sup>nd</sup> December, when the days are the longest and the shortest respectively. It indicates the time when the sun reaches its maximum distance from the Equator. It is called Summer Solstice when it touches the Tropic of Cancer about the 21<sup>st</sup> June and Winter Solstice when it touches that of Capricorn about 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

**Steppes** – This is the region of temperate grasslands in the northern hemisphere especially in Asia and Europe.

**Stratosphere** – Second layer of the earth's atmosphere; begins at a height of nearly 10kms above equator, 8 kilometers at latitude 50 and 6 kilometers at the Poles.

**Titan** – The name of the Saturnian's moon where the European Space Probe mission Huygens spacecraft landed.

**Tornadoes** – Are violent and tempestuous whirlwinds characterized by a black funnel-shaped cloud hanging from heavy cumulonimbus.

**Trade Winds** – Winds which blow steadily towards the equator and are deflected westward by the eastward rotation of the earth. North of the equator they have a south westerly direction and are called the N.E. trades, while, south of it they blow towards the N.W. and are called the S.E. trades. It is these winds which are called the monsoon in the Indian Ocean.

**Tributary** – A small riverlet which runs into main stream of a river.

**Troposphere** – This is the lowest gaseous layer of the atmosphere and extends to a height of about 10 kilometers from the earth.

**Tundra** – Tundra are vast stretches of desert land in Arctic and Antarctic regions. The region is too cold for the trees to grow. The reindeer is the only animal which is found here and is a source of milk and meat and dress for the poor denizens of these lands.

**Twilight** – Light from the sky when the sun is below the horizon either in the morning or evening.

**Typhoons** â€" Tempestuous storms occurring between July and October along the eastern seaboard of Asia between the Philippines and Japan.

**Ursa Major** â€" The Greater Bear, a constellation familiar to all observers because of the brilliance of the seven stars forming its outline.

**Ursa Minor** â€" The Lesser Bear Constellation. Like the Ursa Major, it has seven permanent stars, of which the pole star is the brightest.

**Water-table** â€" The surface below which fissures and pores in the strata are saturated with water.