

Plateaus, Coasts & Islands

Cliffside Plateau with Landling

Learning target

Compare common landforms and locate them on a map.



Before you begin

Use the reference page and discussion prompts on their own, or open the optional browser adventure. No earlier lesson or physical kit is required.

For online play: use an internet-connected current browser with local storage enabled. Read the three-part Gemling briefing, answer the quick check, and apply the evidence at three checkpoints. Retry feedback supports review; results are not a secure test or gradebook.

Use for teacher-led review, science centers or partner practice. Independent readers may need support with the vocabulary below. The design target is grades 3-5; choose support based on the learner.

Vocabulary and concepts to discuss

Elevated flat land; cliffs; coasts; islands and peninsulas

Open Cliffside Plateau - direct lesson link

Scan the QR code or use the clickable link. This guide is usable offline; the adventure runs on an external educational website.



Plateaus, Coasts & Islands - key ideas

1. The first clues

A plateau is elevated land with a relatively flat top. A cliff is a steep face; both can appear near a plateau edge.

2. How the clues connect

A coast is where land meets the ocean. An island has water all around it; a peninsula remains connected to larger land on one side.

3. Our evidence record

Map A shows water on every side of a land patch. Map B shows a narrow land connection. Use that connection, not the size of the patch, to tell them apart.

Keep the science accurate

Keep map reading and observable forms central. Detailed plate mechanics and contour calculations are extensions.

Apply the evidence

Use a specific observation from this lesson to explain one choice. Point to a clue, then connect that clue to a scientific idea.

Curriculum reference: <https://www.nextgenscience.org/dci-arrangement/4-ess2-earths-systems>

Talk through the evidence

1. Which feature has a raised, relatively flat top?

Expected answer: A plateau

Reasoning: A plateau is elevated land with a relatively flat top. A cliff is a steep face; both can appear near a plateau edge.

2. What is land surrounded by water called?

Expected answer: An island

Reasoning: A coast is where land meets the ocean. An island has water all around it; a peninsula remains connected to larger land on one side.

3. Which map shows a peninsula?

Expected answer: Map B

Reasoning: A coast is where land meets the ocean. An island has water all around it; a peninsula remains connected to larger land on one side.

4. Where would you mark a coast?

Expected answer: Where land meets the ocean

Reasoning: A coast is where land meets the ocean. An island has water all around it; a peninsula remains connected to larger land on one side.

Guide the discussion

Ask learners to name the evidence that supports their answer. If an answer differs, revisit the matching key idea on page 2 and invite a revised explanation.

Online rewards: this lesson grants one fixed digital Expedition Discovery. Five saved digital Gemling friends become available only after all six distinct subject lessons are complete, in any order. Digital rewards do not establish physical ownership.