

Physical Science Vocabulary

Geology

Minerals

atom	atomic number	cleavage	compound
electron	crystal form	element	fracture
hardness	ion	isotope	luster
mass number	mineral	neutron	Mohs hardness scale
nucleus	ore	proton	rock
streak	silicates	tetrahedral	

Rocks and Mass Wasting

sedimentary rock	igneous rock	metamorphic rock	weathering
coarse-grained	detrital	evaporite	extrusive
volcanic	intrusive	plutonic	fine-grained
foliated	glassy	lava	magma
lithification	nonfoliated	porphyritic	strata
mechanical weathering	chemical weathering	rock cycle	

Rivers and Groundwater

alluvium	aquiclude	aquifer	artesian well
backswamp	base level	bed load	capacity
cavern	competence	delta	discharge
dissolved load	divide	drainage basin	entrenched meander
floodplain	geyser	gradient	groundwater
hot spring	karst topography	mass wasting	meander
natural levee	oxbow lake	permeability	porosity
rejuvenation	sinkhole	spring	stalactite
stalagmite	suspended load	transpiration	water cycle
water table	well	yazoo tributary	zone of aeration
zone of saturation	subsidence		

Glaciers and Deserts

alluvial fan	alpine glacier	arête	blowout
cirque	crevasse	cross beds	deflation
desert	desert pavement	drift	drumlin
dune	end moraine	ephemeral stream	esker
fiord	glacial erratic	glacial striations	glacial trough
glacier	ground moraine	hanging valley	horn
ice sheets	kame	kettle	lateral moraine
loess	medial moraine	outwash plain	playa lake
Pleistocene epoch	plucking	pluvial lake	rock flour
steppe	till	zone of accumulation	zone of wastage

Plate Tectonics

continental drift	convergent boundary	deep-ocean trench	divergent boundary
hot spot	island arc	normal polarity	paleomagnetism
Pangaea	plate	plate tectonics	polar wandering
reverse polarity	rift	rift valley	seafloor spreading
subduction zone	transform boundary	volcanic arc	

Earthquakes

accretionary wedge
basin
dome
fault
graben
magnitude
normal fault
Richter scale
seismogram
strike-slip fault
Mercalli

aftershock
body wave
earthquake
focus
horst
mantle
outer core
secondary wave
seismograph
surface wave
moment magnitude

anticline
crust
elastic rebound
fold
inner core
Moho boundary
primary wave
seismic sea wave
seismology
syncline

asthenosphere
dip-slip fault
epicenter
foreshock
lithosphere
mountain building
reverse fault
tsunami
shadow zone
thrust fault

Volcanoes

aa flow
composite cone
basalt
pyroclastic flow
vent

batholith
crater
laccolith
pyroclastics
viscosity

caldera
dike
nuée ardente
shield volcano
volcanic neck

cinder cone
fissure eruption
flood
pahoehoe flow
sill
volcano

Geological Time

absolute date
conformable
eon
fossil succession
index fossil
Paleozoic era
Radioactivity
unconformity

angular unconformity
correlation
epoch
geological time scale
Mesozoic era
period
radiometric dating
uniformitarianism

catastrophism
cross-cutting relationships
era
half-life
nonconformity
Phanerozoic eon
relative dating

Cenozoic era
disconformity
fossil
inclusions
original horizontality
Precambrian
superposition

Meteorology

Atmosphere

air
convection
infrared
rotation
Tropic of Cancer
visible light
electromagnetic radiation

albedo
element
isotherm
solstice
Tropic of Capricorn
weather

climate
equinox
mesosphere
stratosphere
troposphere
circle of illumination

conduction
greenhouse effect
revolution
thermosphere
ultraviolet
environmental lapse rate

Clouds and Precipitation

advection fog
condensation nuclei
dew point
freezing
glaze
latent heat
psychrometer
relative humidity
snow
sublimation

cirrus
convergence
dry adiabatic rate
freezing rain
hail
melting
radiation fog
rime
specific humidity
upslope fog

cloud
cumulus
evaporation
frontal fog
humidity
orographic lifting
rain
saturation
steam fog
vapor pressure

condensation
deposition
fog
frontal wedging
hygroscopic nuclei
precipitation fog
rainshadow desert
sleet
stratus
wet adiabatic rate

Wind

aneroid barometer
Chinook
cyclone
isobar
monsoon
polar high
Santa Ana
trade winds
wind vane

anticyclone
convergence
divergence
jet stream
mountain breeze
pressure gradient
sea breeze
valley breeze

barograph
Coriolis effect
equatorial low
land breeze
polar easterlies
pressure tendency
subpolar low
westerlies

barometric tendency
cup anemometer
geostrophic wind
mercury barometer
polar front
prevailing wind
subtropical high
wind

Weather

air mass
Doppler radar
hurricane
polar air mass
tornado
tropical depression

air-mass weather
eye
lightning
source region
tornado warning
tropical storm

cold front
eye wall
maritime air mass
storm surge
tornado watch
warm front

continental air mass
front
middle-latitude cyclone
thunderstorm
tropical air mass
supercell

Oceanography

Ocean Floor

abyssal plain
continental rise
deep-ocean basin
mid-ocean ridge
passive continental margin
terrigenous sediment

active continental margin
continental shelf
deep-ocean trench
oceanic plateau
rift valley
turbidity current

biogenous sediment
continental slope
gas hydrate
oceanic ridge
seismic reflection profile
volcanic island arc

continental margin
continental volcanic arc
hydrogenous sediment
oceanography
submarine canyon

Ocean Water and Ocean Life

abyssal zone
biomass
intertidal zone
pelagic zone
plankton
trophic level

aphotic zone
euphotic zone
nekton
photic zone
pycnocline
zooplankton

benthic zone
food chain
neritic zone
photosynthesis
salinity

benthos
food web
oceanic zone
phytoplankton
thermocline

The Dynamic Ocean

backshore
beach drift
breakwater
estuary
longshore current
offshore zone
shoreline
surf
tidal flat
wave-cut cliff
wave period

barrier island
beach face
coast
foreshore
marine terrace
rip current
spit
thermohaline circulation
tide
wave-cut platform
wave refraction

baymouth bar
beach nourishment
coastline
groin
neap tide
seawall
spring tide
tidal current
tombolo
wave height

beach
berm
emergent coast
gyre
nearshore zone
shore
submergent coast
tidal delta
upwelling
wavelength

Astronomy

Solar System

asteroid
comet
Jovian planet
meteorite
Ptolemaic system
terrestrial planet

astronomical unit
escape velocity
lunar regolith
meteoroid
retrograde motion

Cassini division
geocentric
maria
meteor shower
stony-iron meteorite

celestial sphere
iron meteorite
meteor
nebular hypothesis
stony meteorite

Universe

absolute magnitude
bright nebula
elliptical galaxy
hydrogen burning
Local Group
neutron star
red giant
Hertzsprung-Russell diagram

apparent magnitude
dark nebula
emission nebula
interstellar dust
magnitude
planetary nebula
reflection nebula
supergiant

Big Bang
degenerate matter
galactic cluster
irregular galaxy
main-sequence stars
protostar
spiral galaxy
supernova

black hole
Doppler effect
Hubble's law
light-year
nebula
pulsar
stellar parallax
white dwarf