

# Land and Water

The fascinating natural forms all around us

**C**an you tell the difference between a bay and a gulf? A mesa and a mountain? Or an isthmus and a peninsula?

All of these are common land and water forms that you will find on maps. The illustration at right shows an imaginary place that includes many of the world's landforms and waterways. Each one has its own special name.

Compare the land and waterways in the illustration with the descriptions below. Then answer the questions.

## Terms to Know

**Archipelago:** A body of water with a group of islands scattered in it.

**Bay:** A large indentation into the land, formed by an ocean, a sea, or a lake; smaller than a gulf.

**Canyon:** A deep, narrow valley with steep, rocky walls; often with a river running along the bottom.

**Cape:** A point of land, often a hook or curve, that juts out far into the water.

**Coastline:** Land that lies along an ocean or other body of water.

**Dam:** A barrier built to control the



flow of water.

**Delta:** A fan-shaped accumulation of rich soil and sand deposited at the mouth of a river, broken up by streams.

**Desert:** Arid, barren land.

**Gulf:** Part of an ocean or a sea that extends into the land; larger than a bay.

**Hill:** A raised area of land that is lower than a mountain and usually has a rounded top.

**Inlet:** An arm of a larger body

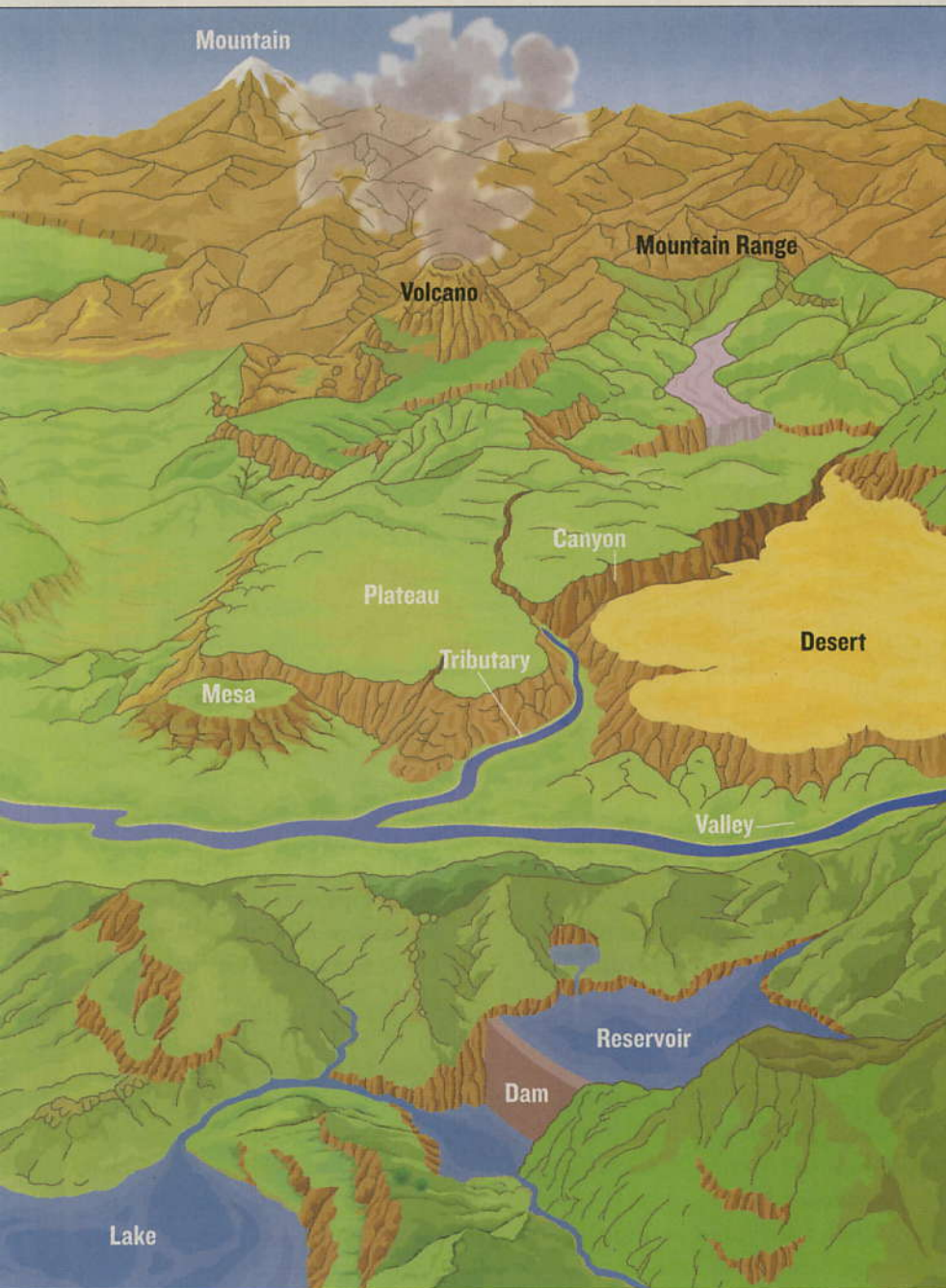
of water (often located between rocky headlands).

**Island:** A body of land, smaller than a continent, that is entirely surrounded by water.

**Isthmus:** A narrow strip of land that connects two larger land areas.

**Lake:** A body of water surrounded entirely by land. It usually has fresh, not salt, water.

**Mesa:** A large, flat-topped hill; common in the Western U.S.



**Mountain:** Raised land, higher than a hill, often having steep, rocky sides.

**Mountain range:** A chain of mountains.

**Ocean:** A large body of water separating continents.

**Peninsula:** A large area of land that juts into a body of water.

**Plain:** A broad area of mostly flat land at a low elevation.

**Plateau:** A broad area of mostly flat land at a high elevation.

**Reservoir:** An artificial lake created to collect water.

**River:** A large stream of water that runs into a lake, a gulf, a sea, or an ocean.

**Sea:** A huge body of salt water partly bordered by land. (Bodies of salt water completely bordered by land are really lakes.)

**Sound:** A long area of ocean lying between two coastlines.

**Strait:** A short, narrow channel of water that connects two larger bodies of water.

**Swamp:** A wetland where trees and shrubs grow; often partly or completely covered with water.

**Tributary:** A stream or river that flows into a larger stream or river.

**Valley:** An area of low-lying land between mountains or hills.

**Volcano:** An opening in a mountain or hill that may erupt with lava, gases, and ash.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What would you call a large group of islands scattered across a sea or an ocean? \_\_\_\_\_
2. A large area of mostly flat, low-lying land is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A large area of mostly flat land at a higher elevation is what type of landform? \_\_\_\_\_
4. An example of a hooked or curved body of land that extends into the ocean: \_\_\_\_\_ Cod.
5. What is an area of ocean lying between two coastlines, such as Long Island and Connecticut? \_\_\_\_\_
6. A large indentation into the land, larger than a bay, is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The Dead Sea, on the border of Israel and Jordan, is surrounded by land. Therefore, it is not a sea, but a \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The Missouri River flows into the Mississippi River. The Missouri is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Mississippi.
9. Panama is a strip of land connecting North and South America. Panama is what type of landform? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Florida and Michigan are areas of land that extend into the water. That landform is called a \_\_\_\_\_.