

# SMART™ Lesson

## Underwater Geography

Underwater geography is the study of the physical features of the ocean floor, as well as the distribution of plant and animal life in the ocean.

### The Ocean Floor

The ocean floor is not flat. It has mountains, valleys, and ridges just like the Earth's surface. The mountains and ridges are created by volcanic activity, while the valleys are formed by tectonic plates spreading apart. The deepest part of the ocean is called the Challenger Deep and is located in the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean. It is approximately 36,000 feet deep.

### Marine Life

The ocean is home to a wide variety of plant and animal life. Marine life can range from tiny plankton to the largest animal on Earth, the blue whale. The ocean also has coral reefs, which are home to many different species of fish and other marine life. Coral reefs are often referred to as the “rainforests of the sea” because of their biodiversity.

### Threats to the Ocean

The ocean is facing many threats, including pollution, overfishing, and climate change. Pollution can come from a variety of sources, such as oil spills, plastic waste, and chemicals. Overfishing is when more fish are caught than can be replaced naturally, causing a decline in fish populations. Climate change is causing the ocean to warm up, which can have a negative impact on marine life, including coral reefs.

### Worksheet Questions

1. What is underwater geography?
2. How is the ocean floor similar to Earth's surface?
3. What is the Challenger Deep?
4. What is the largest animal on Earth?
5. What are coral reefs and why are they important?
6. Name three threats to the ocean.