

Week 4: Natural Features and Landforms

1. Introduction and Learning Objectives

This week's lecture focuses on **natural features and landforms** – the physical shapes and structures on the Earth's surface. These include mountains, valleys, rivers, plains, and more. Understanding and describing these landforms is essential for geographers, especially when discussing land use, regional planning, and environmental change.

By the end of this lecture, students will be able to:

- Identify and name major natural features in English.
- Use precise vocabulary to describe them.
- Understand two definitions for each key term from authoritative sources.
- Apply descriptive language (adjectives + prepositions) in context.
- Practice simple present tense for general truths about geography.

2. Key Vocabulary: Major Landforms (with Definitions)

Mountain



- **Definition 1:** “A large natural elevation of the earth's surface rising abruptly from the surrounding level.”

— *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2022

- **Definition 2:** “A landform that extends above the surrounding terrain, usually with steep slopes and a summit.”

— *National Geographic Encyclopedia*, 2021

Examples:

- *The Atlas Mountains are located in North Africa.*
- *Mountains often influence local climate patterns.*

Valley



- **Definition 1:** “A low area of land between hills or mountains, typically with a river running through it.”

— *Collins English Dictionary – Geography Edition*, 2020

- **Definition 2:** “An elongated depression in the land, formed by erosion or movement of tectonic plates.”

— *Geographic Information Science Journal*, 2019

Examples:

- *The Nile Valley is one of the most fertile regions in Egypt.*
- *Valleys often serve as transport corridors and settlement areas.*

Plateau



- **Definition 1:** “An area of relatively level high ground.”
— *Cambridge Dictionary of Geography*, 2021
- **Definition 2:** “A flat, elevated landform that rises sharply above the surrounding area.”
— *Dictionary of Earth Sciences*, Oxford University Press, 2019

Examples:

- *The Hoggar Plateau is located in southern Algeria.*
- *Plateaus are common in arid regions and often used for grazing.*

River



- **Definition 1:** “A large natural stream of water flowing in a channel to the sea, a lake, or another river.”
— *Oxford Dictionary of Geography*, 2022
- **Definition 2:** “A dynamic watercourse that shapes landscapes through erosion and deposition.”
— *Environmental Geography Textbook*, Pearson, 2020

Examples:

- *The Amazon River flows through Brazil and several other countries.*
- *Rivers are essential for irrigation and human settlements.*

Desert



- **Definition 1:** “A barren area of landscape where little precipitation occurs and living conditions are hostile for plant and animal life.”
— *Oxford English for Geography*, 2018
- **Definition 2:** “A region that receives less than 250 mm of rainfall per year.”
— *National Geographic Glossary*, 2020

Examples:

- *The Sahara is the largest hot desert in the world.*
- *Deserts often have extreme temperature fluctuations.*

3. Grammar Focus: Present Simple for General Descriptions

In geography, we often use the **present simple tense** to describe general truths or permanent features.

Structure:

Subject + base verb (+s/es)

Examples in Context:

- *“The Nile flows northward into the Mediterranean Sea.”*
- *“Mountains affect the climate of nearby areas.”*
- *“Deserts receive very little rainfall.”*

Grammar References:

- Murphy, R. (2012). *English Grammar in Use*. CUP.
- Eastwood, J. (2002). *Oxford Practice Grammar*. OUP.

4. Language Practice: Descriptive Sentences Using Landform Vocabulary

Examples:

- *“A valley lies between two steep mountains.”*
- *“Rivers flow across many regions, shaping the land over time.”*
- *“The plateau rises abruptly above the surrounding plains.”*
- *“Many deserts are located near the Tropics.”*

Task:

In pairs, students will create **5 sentences** using at least **3 new vocabulary words** and **2 present simple structures**.

5. Homework Assignment

Task:

Select a natural region in Algeria (e.g., Sahara, Aurès Mountains, Chélif Valley). Write a paragraph (8–10 sentences) describing its major landforms.

Include:

- At least 3 vocabulary terms from today
- 3 present simple verb forms
- 2 descriptive adjectives
- Use of prepositions (e.g., across, between, beyond)

6. References

- Oxford Dictionary of Geography (2022)
- National Geographic Glossary (2020, 2021)

- Murphy, R. (2012). *English Grammar in Use*. CUP
- Collins English Dictionary – Geography Edition (2020)
- Environmental Geography Textbook, Pearson (2020)
- Dictionary of Earth Sciences, Oxford University Press (2019)