

Land in Motion

Sort land features from changes that reshape Earth.

WG.5.b "describing major physical and environmental features and how geography may change over time;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

PHYSICAL FEATURE

A physical feature is a natural part of Earth's surface. It can be land or water that you can locate on a map.

A plateau is a large, raised area of mostly flat land.

GEOGRAPHIC CHANGE

A geographic change is a natural process that reshapes Earth's surface over time. It can create, remove, or move land.

A lava flow cools and adds new land to the surface.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each item, circle FEATURE or CHANGE, then choose two items and explain how you knew in the PROVE IT section.

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. A mountain range | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2. An island | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3. Floodwater cuts a new channel through soil. | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4. A desert | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5. Wind moves sand into new dunes. | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 6. Waves wear away a cliff. | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7. A canyon | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8. A glacier leaves piles of rock after melting. | <input type="button" value="FEATURE"/> | <input type="button" value="CHANGE"/> |
| <hr/> | | |

2

PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3

MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

MAKE YOUR OWN: Write one new example of a Physical Feature and one new example of a Geographic Change.

FEATURE _____

CHANGE _____

CHALLENGE

CHALLENGE: Name one physical feature and describe one natural process that could change it over time in two sentences. Then apply the idea to this regional case: The Aletsch Glacier is a large mass of ice in the Swiss Alps in Europe. NASA compared 1984 and 2024 observations showing that its ice cover had shortened and narrowed as ice was lost. Describe this physical feature and explain how ice loss changed its extent over those decades. Use separate paper if needed.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	A mountain range	FEATURE	A mountain range is a natural landform.
2	An island	FEATURE	An island is a natural physical feature surrounded by water.
3	Floodwater cuts a new channel through soil.	CHANGE	Moving water reshapes land by cutting a channel.
4	A desert	FEATURE	A desert is a natural region with very little rainfall.
5	Wind moves sand into new dunes.	CHANGE	Wind moves sediment and builds new landforms.
6	Waves wear away a cliff.	CHANGE	Wave erosion removes rock and changes the coast.
7	A canyon	FEATURE	A canyon is a natural landform.
8	A glacier leaves piles of rock after melting.	CHANGE	A glacier moves and deposits rock, reshaping the land.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **FEATURE:** Physical Feature: A plain is a broad area of mostly flat land.
- **CHANGE:** Geographic Change: An earthquake can raise part of the seafloor into new land.

Challenge: A lake is a physical feature. Sediment carried by streams can fill parts of it over many years, making it smaller. Regional response: Aletsch is a glacier in Switzerland's Alps. Loss of ice left a shorter, narrower area of ice cover between 1984 and 2024, changing the extent of this physical feature.

Items 1, 2, 4, and 7 are **FEATURE**. Items 3, 5, 6, and 8 are **CHANGE**. Accept accurate student-created examples that clearly name a natural feature or describe a natural process that reshapes Earth. Require the regional explanation as well as the original response. Regional source: NASA Earth Observatory, Glacial Losses in the Swiss Alps (2025).