

Major Domains & Landforms of the Earth

Class 6 Social Science

Complete Study Notes

Learning Objectives

Students will understand the four major domains of the Earth and the different landforms found on its surface. They will learn about continents, oceans, the atmosphere, mountains, plateaus, plains, and the natural processes that continuously shape our planet. The chapter also explains how these physical features influence human life and the environment.

Introduction to the Earth's Major Domains

The Earth is the only known planet that supports life because it has the perfect combination of land, water, and air. These are organized into four major domains known as the Lithosphere, Hydrosphere, Atmosphere, and Biosphere. Together, these domains create suitable conditions for plants, animals, and humans to survive.

Understanding these domains helps us appreciate the Earth's natural environment and the balance required to sustain life.

The Four Major Domains of the Earth

The Earth's surface is structurally divided into four interconnected spheres:

- **The Lithosphere** is the solid outer layer of the Earth consisting of rocks, soil, mountains, and plains. It provides land for settlements, farming, and natural resources.
- **The Hydrosphere** includes all forms of water found on Earth, such as oceans, rivers, lakes, glaciers, groundwater, and water vapour. Nearly 71% of the Earth's surface is covered with water.
- **The Atmosphere** is the blanket of gases surrounding the Earth. It protects us from harmful solar radiation, regulates temperature, and provides oxygen and other gases essential for life.
- **The Biosphere** is the narrow zone where land, water, and air interact, making it possible for all living organisms to survive.

Continents, Oceans, and the Atmosphere

The Earth's land is divided into seven continents—Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia. Asia is the largest continent, while Australia is the smallest. The oceans are interconnected and maintain a common sea level that is used as a reference for measuring elevations on land.

The atmosphere is divided into five layers: the Troposphere, Stratosphere, Mesosphere, Thermosphere, and Exosphere. Each layer performs important functions that help protect life on Earth.

Major Landforms of the Earth

The Earth's surface is constantly changing due to internal forces, such as tectonic movements, and external forces, such as erosion and deposition.

Mountains are high landforms formed through folding, faulting, or volcanic activity. **Plateaus** are elevated flat-topped regions that are rich in minerals and natural resources. **Plains** are broad, flat areas formed mainly by river deposits and are among the most fertile and densely populated regions in the world. These landforms influence climate, agriculture, transportation, industries, and human settlements.

Ecological Interconnectedness: The Earth's domains and landforms provide natural resources, support biodiversity, influence weather and climate, and determine where people live and work. Understanding these physical features helps students appreciate the relationship between nature and human life.

Practice Questions

1. Name the four major domains of the Earth.
2. Which domain supports all forms of life?
3. Name the seven continents.
4. What is the difference between a plateau and a plain?
5. Why are plains densely populated?

Answer Key

- **ANSWER 1:** The four major domains of the Earth are the Lithosphere, Hydrosphere, Atmosphere, and Biosphere.
- **ANSWER 2:** The Biosphere supports all forms of life because it is the region where land, water, and air interact.
- **ANSWER 3:** The seven continents are Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, and Australia.
- **ANSWER 4:** A plateau is a raised flat-topped landform, while a plain is a broad, low-lying, and generally fertile flat area.
- **ANSWER 5:** Plains are densely populated because they have fertile soil, flat land, good transportation facilities, and favorable conditions for agriculture and settlements.