

Structure of the Ocean Floor

Chapter 4: Structure of the Ocean Floor · Topic 1

Key Concept

The continental shelf is a gently sloping, shallow extension of a continent under water, rich in marine life and resources.

The continental slope descends more steeply from the shelf to the deep ocean floor, marking the edge of the continent.

The abyssal plain is a flat, deep area of the ocean floor, covering large stretches of the deep ocean.

Ocean trenches are the deepest parts of the ocean, formed where tectonic plates collide, like the Mariana Trench.

Quick Revision Notes

- Continental shelf: shallow, gently sloping extension.
- Rich in marine life, resources.
- Continental slope: steeper descent from shelf.
- Marks edge of the continent.
- Abyssal plain: flat, deep ocean floor area.
- Covers large ocean stretches.
- Ocean trenches: deepest ocean parts.
- Formed by tectonic plate collision.

Practice Questions

- 1 Draw a diagram of the ocean floor's structure.
- 2 Discuss the continental shelf's importance for marine life.
- 3 Research the Mariana Trench.
- 4 Discuss how ocean trenches form.
- 5 Compare the continental shelf and abyssal plain.
- 6 Explain the ocean floor's features in your own words.