

Mountains, Valleys, Plains & More · Conversation & classroom guide

Learning with a grown-up · Ages 4–8 · Flexible participation

Which two landforms look flat? How are they different?

Learning aim: Identify and compare landforms by their shape and position.

A five-minute conversation

Look across the landscape with Olivia. Ask your child to choose a shape that catches their eye, then read its label together.

Start here: Offer two pictured choices and read the definitions aloud.

Explore further: Ask why a plain and plateau can both be flat but are different landforms.

Which two landforms look flat? How are they different?

Answer cue: The plain and plateau both have broad, mostly flat surfaces. The plateau is raised above the land around it. Accept pointing and 'this one is higher.'

Where is the valley? What is on either side?

Answer cue: The valley is the low land between the mountain slopes; the river follows its low floor in this illustration.

What makes this piece of land an island?

Answer cue: Water goes all the way around it. Trace its shore with a finger or gaze.

Keep the idea clear

Real mountains, hills and valleys have many shapes. Snow or a pointed top is not required for a mountain, and there is no single worldwide height boundary between a hill and a mountain. This picture combines examples; it is not a real travel map.

Try: Make two land shapes

Materials: A sheet of scrap paper, or just your hands.

1. Fold or gently scrunch paper into a raised shape, or show one with your hand.
2. Keep another part flat. Decide which part could stand for a hill or plain.
3. Explain one difference. This is a simple model, not an exact-sized landscape.

What this can show: Can the child indicate the plateau's raised flat top and identify water around the island? Accept gestures before technical terms. Share the looking and vocabulary. No trip, cutting or materials purchase is needed.

Return to it: Compare a plain and a plateau: both can be flat, so what else must you notice?

Mountains, Valleys, Plains & More · In the classroom

A 20-minute classroom lesson

Prepare: Read the picture and answer cues. Have the optional explorer's notebook available. A sheet of scrap paper, or just your hands.

Words to explore

mountain — Land that rises high above the land around it.

hill — Raised land, usually lower than a mountain.

valley — Low land between hills or mountains.

plain — A wide area of mostly flat land.

plateau — Broad, high land with a mostly flat top.

island — Land with water all around it.

3 min · Notice: Notice: allow one minute for silent looking or pointing.

4 min · Compare: Compare: read plain and plateau, and invite children to show how they differ.

8 min · Try together: Fold or gently scrunch paper into a raised shape, or show one with your hand. Keep another part flat. Decide which part could stand for a hill or plain. Explain one difference. This is a simple model, not an exact-sized landscape.

5 min · Explain: Explain: children select two landforms and give one pictured difference.

Understanding check: Can the child indicate the plateau's raised flat top and identify water around the island? Accept gestures before technical terms.

Answer guidance: The plain and plateau both have broad, mostly flat surfaces. The plateau is raised above the land around it. Accept pointing and 'this one is higher.' The valley is the low land between the mountain slopes; the river follows its low floor in this illustration. Water goes all the way around it. Trace its shore with a finger or gaze.

Describe the position and shape, not only its color; children may point, sign, speak or use eye gaze.

A response to keep

On notebook page 4, sketch or name one landform you want to remember.

One clue I can explain now...

Something else I wonder...

<https://kiddos.ai/learn/olivia-the-globetrotter/landforms>

Related story: Olivia the Globetrotter stories — Olivia's travel stories invite close looking at a place. This invented teaching landscape adds geography vocabulary; it is not a scene from a particular book.

Our discovery record

Use words, marks, a drawing or an adult's notes. Keep this page with you; nothing needs to be uploaded.

Date / time (if useful): _____

My question or idea

What I noticed

What I think now

What I want to explore next

Stories to continue together: <https://kiddos.ai/books>

Kiddos Books on the App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/app/id6720721998>

Explore the available physical books: <https://www.amazon.com/author/kiddos-books>