
Glossary

Adit	Horizontal, or nearly horizontal tunnel or mine entrance
Ammonoid	A subclass of molluscs with coiled shells belonging to the class Cephalopoda
Anticline	Arch-shaped fold of rocks, closing upwards
Armour-stone	Large stone block used in coastal defence and other engineering works
Aureole	Area surrounding an igneous intrusion affected by metamorphic changes
Batholith	A large body of intrusive igneous rock with no visible floor
Bituminous	Rich in hydrocarbons or bitumen
Bivalve	Aquatic molluscs of the class Bivalvia, characterised by paired shell valves.
Blanket bog	An extensive area of peat bog
Bouguer anomaly	A gravity anomaly calculated after corrections for latitude, elevation and terrain.
Brachiopod	A phylum of solitary marine shelled invertebrates
Braided rivers	A river consisting of a number of small channels separated by bars
Breccia	Coarse-grained clastic sedimentary rock consisting of angular fragments of pre-existing rocks
Brockram	A term used in NW England for breccias and conglomerates of Permo-Triassic age
Calc-silicate	A group of minerals consisting of calcium silicates
Chert	A dense, very hard rock composed of extremely fine-grained silica.
Chronostratigraphy	The standard hierarchical definition of geological time units
Conglomerate	Coarse-grained clastic sedimentary rock composed of rounded or subrounded fragments of pre-existing rocks
Conodonts	An extinct group of microscopic marine animal fossils, composed mainly of calcium phosphate, and which commonly resemble fish teeth and worm jaws.
Continental shelf	The gently sloping offshore zone, extending usually to about 200 metres depth
Crinoid	Crinoids, or 'sea lillies', are marine animals composed of calcareous plates, belonging to the phylum Echinodermata
Cross-bedding	Internally inclined layers in a rock related to the original direction of current flow
Cupola	A dome-shaped offshoot rising from the top of a major igneous intrusion
Desiccation cracks	Polygonal cracks formed in a sediment as it dries out in a terrestrial environment, also known as shrinkage cracks
Displacement	The relative movement on either side of a fault plane
Doline	A steep-sided enclosed depression in a limestone region
Dolomitic limestone	A limestone containing a high concentration of the mineral dolomite
Dry valley	A valley produced by running water but which is presently streamless

Dyke	Discordant, sheet-like bodies of intrusive igneous rock in a vertical, or near-vertical orientation
Evaporites	Sedimentary deposit of minerals formed by natural evaporation
Fault	A fracture in rocks along which some displacement has taken place
Feldspar	A group of rock-forming minerals consisting of silicates of aluminium, sodium, potassium, calcium and more rarely barium
Felsite	A general term used to denote fine-grained igneous rocks
Gangue	Generally valueless mineral or rock which accompanies an ore
Gastropod	Molluscs belonging to the class Gastropoda, usually with coiled shells
Gouge	Broken rock, often shale or clay, in a mineral vein or between fault planes
Graptolite	A group of extinct colonial marine organisms. Generally placed in the phylum Chordata, but sometimes regarded as Coelenterata. They consist of one or more branches or stipes in which individuals in the colony occur in rows
Greywackes	A sandstone containing a high proportion of silt, clay and rock fragments in addition to quartz grains
Hornfels	A fine-grained rock that has been partly or completely recrystallised by contact metamorphism
Inlier	An outcrop of older rocks surrounded by those of younger age
Joints	A fracture, or potential fracture, in a rock adjacent to which there has been no displacement
Lamprophyre	A group of intrusive igneous rocks characterised by abnormally high contents of silicate minerals such as biotite, hornblende and augite, with generally small amounts of feldspar
Lapilli-tuff	A compact rock composed of small pieces of lava rounded during eruption
Lithology	The character of a rock expressed in terms of its mineral composition, structure, grain size and arrangement of its constituents
Magma	Molten rock
Magnetic anomaly	The value of the local magnetic field remaining after the subtraction of the dipole portion of the Earth's field
Metamorphism	Change in the mineralogy and structure of a rock as a result of the effects of heat and/or pressure
Monocline	A one-limbed flexure on either side of which the strata are horizontal or dip at only low angles
Mountain building	The complex series of geological processes which create mountains
Nunataks	An isolated mountain peak projecting from an ice sheet
Ostracod	Small arthropods belonging to the subclass Ostracoda, having a twin shell
Outlier	A remnant of a younger rock surrounded by older strata
Palaeomagnetic	The magnetic characteristics of a rock formed in the geological past

Pegmatite	Igneous rocks of especially coarse grain size
Phenocryst	Large crystals, usually of near perfect shape, embedded in a fine-grained matrix in igneous rocks
Phreatic	Volcanic eruptions generated by the interaction between hot magma and surface or ground water
Porphyritic	The term applied to igneous rocks which contain isolated crystals, or phenocrysts, larger than those forming the main body of the rock
Radiometric dating	The method of determining the geological age by measuring the relative abundance of parent and daughter isotopes in rocks
Rendzina	A brown earth soil of humid or semi-arid grassland that has formed over calcareous parent material.
Rottenstone	Any highly decomposed but still coherent rock
Sedimentary rocks	Those rocks formed by the accumulation of fragments from the wasting of previous rocks or organic materials, deposited as layers of sediment
Sill	A tabular igneous intrusion with concordant contacts with the surrounding wall rocks
Sink hole	see doline
Stratigraphy	The definition and description of the stratified rocks of the Earth's crust
Streak	The name given to the colour of the powder of a mineral or rock
Supergene	Alteration formed near the surface
Syncline	A concave-upwards fold with the youngest rocks in the centre
Tailings	Fine-grained waste from mineral processing operations
Throw	The amount of displacement on a fault
Tonstein	A rock, composed mainly of the mineral kaolinite, typically found as thin layers in coal-bearing sequences of rocks. Tonsteins may have been formed by the decomposition of volcanic ash-falls.
Trilobite	Extinct marine arthropods characterised by having a segmented oval body divided into three segments
Tufa	A porous or cellular deposit of calcium carbonate deposited from lime-rich springs
Tuff	A rock formed of compacted volcanic fragments
Turbidity current	A dense sub-marine flow of mixed water and sediment, capable of very rapid movement
Unconformity	A substantial break in the succession of stratified sedimentary rocks following a period when no deposition was taking place
Volcaniclastic	A rock containing volcanic fragments in varying proportions
Xenolith	A foreign inclusion in an igneous rock