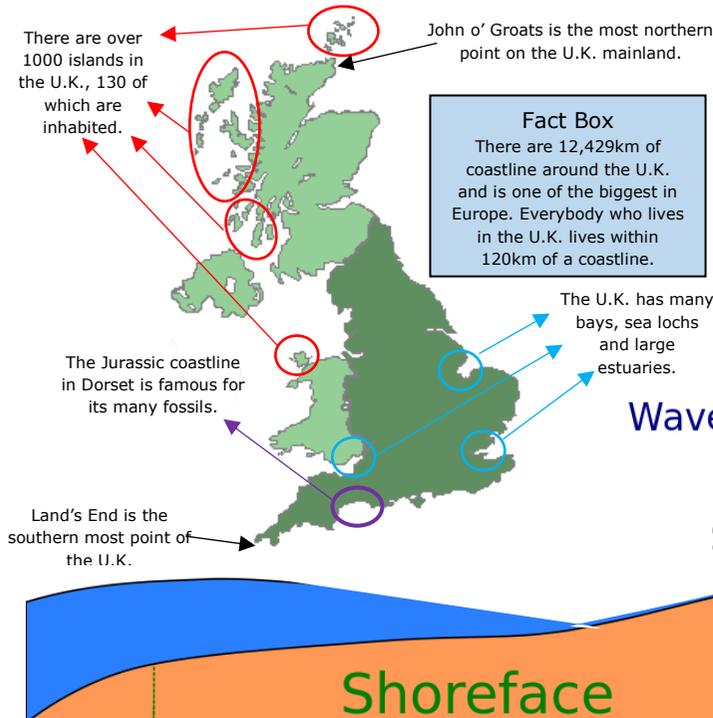


Coasts

The coastline is forever changing shape. Over hundreds of years, waves crash against headlands and cliffs, wearing away the land. These waves also build up sheltered bays and beaches. However, storms and rough seas can sometimes erode the land in just a few hours.



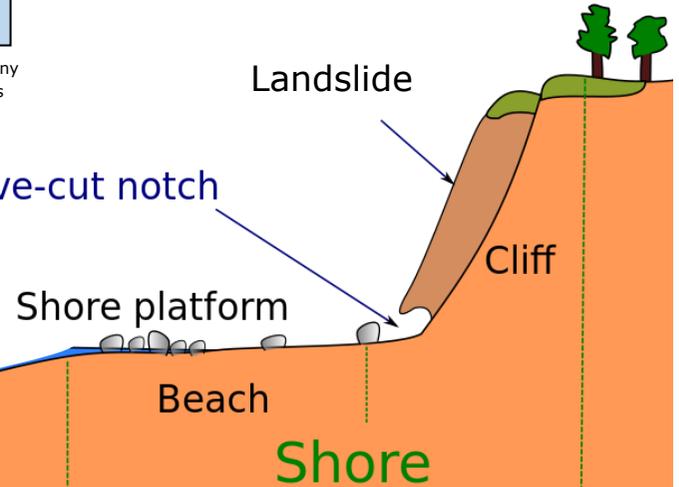
Fact Box

Much of the plastic we use and throw away can end up in the sea. Ocean currents then bring plastics back onshore and leave them on beaches. Every day, approximately 8 million pieces of plastic pollution find their way into our oceans.

SEA	LOWER BEACH	UPPER BEACH	CLIFF BASE	CLIFF
The sea is made up of salty water and contains creatures such as fish, seals, jellyfish and starfish.	This area is filled with sand but can sometimes be made of rocks and pebbles.	Beyond the beach, rock pools and shingle and pebbles create an environment suitable for seaweed and barnacles.	Large boulders and rocks form at the base of a cliff due to landslides. Here, wood, rubbish dead seaweed remain.	This steep rock face can have narrow ledges, cave and is home to birds, flowers and bushes.

Key Vocabulary

abrasion	scraping or wearing away, often caused by stones
undercut	cut or wear away the bottom of a cliff
mudflats	a stretch of muddy land left uncovered at low tide
shingle	a mass of small rounded pebbles on a seashore
headland	narrow piece of land sticking out into the sea
erosion	the wearing away of rock and land by frost, rivers, waves, wind and ice
cave	chamber on the side of a cliff worn by erosion
sand dune	a hill of loose sand built up by wind along a beach
beach	waves leave sand on land and it is smoothed by waves – can also be made of pebbles or rocks
landslip	collapse of a mass of earth or rock from a cliff
tide	the rising and falling of the sea, usually twice in each day at a particular place, due to the attraction of the moon and sun



Headland Erosion

<p>Cliffs</p>	Cliffs are vertical (or nearly vertical) rock exposures caused by weather and sea erosion. It marks the end of the land where a sea or river begins. They can also be created in mountainous areas.
<p>Arches</p>	Arches are formed when weaker parts of the cliff are eroded over hundreds of years by water and forms a cave. Water finally breaks through the rock, leaving a large hole through which water can pass.
<p>Stacks</p>	Once an arch is formed, continuous erosion of the rocks by weather and the sea makes the arch so large that it collapses leaving tall stacks instead.
<p>Stumps</p>	Stumps are stacks which have been eroded further by the weather and the sea. Stacks eventually collapse to leave short stumps of rock jutting out of the sea.

Sea Defences

<p>Groynes</p>	Groynes interrupt wave action and protect the beach from being washed away by longshore drift. Longshore drift is the wave action that slowly erodes the beach. They are wooded structures that last around 25 years.
<p>Sea Walls</p>	Sea walls aim to protect the coastline from flooding and erosion. They can be made from rocks, steel or other heavy materials but they can be very expensive to make and maintain. Gabions act in a similar way and are bundles of rocks inside a metal mesh.

Other Features

<p>Sheltered Bays</p>	A wide inlet of sea where the land curves inwards. It connects a larger body of water such as an ocean or lake. A cove is a smaller type of bay with a narrow entrance.
<p>Peninsulas</p>	A peninsula is a piece of land almost entirely surrounded by water or sticking out into a body of water but is still connected to the mainland. It is therefore surrounded by water on three sides.