

Oceans, Rivers, and Lakes

by Linda Ruggieri



We live on a wet planet. In fact, most of the surface of Earth is covered with water.

Oceans are the largest bodies of water on Earth. A body of water is a part of Earth's surface covered with water. You probably know that ocean water is salty. Do you know why? It is mainly because rain brings salt from the land and into the ocean! Here is how that happens: Rain falls onto rocks. The rainwater breaks down salt and minerals from the rocks. The water mixes with the salt and minerals. Then it flows into the oceans.

Scientists have discovered two other sources of salty ocean water. Some salt comes from underwater volcanoes. Other salt spurts from heated vents on the ocean floor. Most ocean salt, however, starts on land.

Lakes are large bodies of water. They are surrounded by land. Lakes

usually have fresh water, but some lakes have salt water. The Great Salt Lake in Utah is a saltwater lake. Lake water does not move from place to place.

Rivers are filled with fresh water that moves from one place to another. The water in rivers comes mostly from rain. Rivers usually flow into oceans.

Streams and *creeks* are also bodies of moving fresh water. They are smaller than rivers. Streams and creeks can come together and form larger streams or rivers.

vent**vent****Advanced Definition****noun**

1. an opening which allows entrance, passage, or exit of a gas or vapor, esp. of air or smoke.

Kitchen smoke and steam escape through this vent.

We keep the heating vent closed in this room because it's rarely occupied.

transitive verb

1. to allow release of; discharge.
2. to suddenly or forcefully give expression to.

He vented his anger on his dog.

3. to relieve; release.

They tried to vent the pressure built up by the compressed steam.

intransitive verb

1. to be released or discharged in order to relieve pressure, esp. through a vent.
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These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. The top is called the main **vent**. Sometimes, gases and smoke burst out too.
2. The central **vent** is an opening at the top from which rocks, gases, and lava can spill or burst. The cracks along the sides of the volcano are called side vents.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is most of the surface of Earth covered with?
 - A. land
 - B. air
 - C. water
2. The article lists examples of bodies of water. What is the first example it lists?
 - A. creeks
 - B. rivers
 - C. oceans
3. "Some salt comes from underwater volcanoes. Other salt spurts from heated vents on the ocean floor."

What does this information tell us about oceans?

- A. Some of the water in oceans comes from rain.
 - B. Oceans are salty.
 - C. Oceans are the largest bodies of water on Earth.
4. Which body of water is most like a river?
 - A. a stream
 - B. a lake
 - C. an ocean
 5. What is the main idea of this article?
 - A. Different bodies of water cover most of the earth.
 - B. Rivers are bodies of fresh water that usually flow into oceans.
 - C. Rainwater mixes with the salt and minerals of rocks.

6. "You probably know that ocean water is salty. Do you know why? It is mainly because rain brings salt from the land and into the ocean!"

Why might the author ask, "Do you know why?"

- A. to prove that most people do not know much about ocean water
- B. to give readers a question to think about after they finish the article
- C. to prepare readers for information that she is about to give them

7. Oceans have salt water, _____ rivers have fresh water.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. What is a difference between oceans and lakes?

9. Name one way that oceans and lakes are alike. Then name one way that rivers, streams, and creeks are alike.

10. Of all the bodies of water described in the article, which two are most similar to each other? Support your answer with evidence from the article.
