



Waterfalls

A waterfall is when a river or stream runs over a ledge. The water 'falls down', hence the name waterfall. Some ledges can be small, others can be hundreds of metres high.



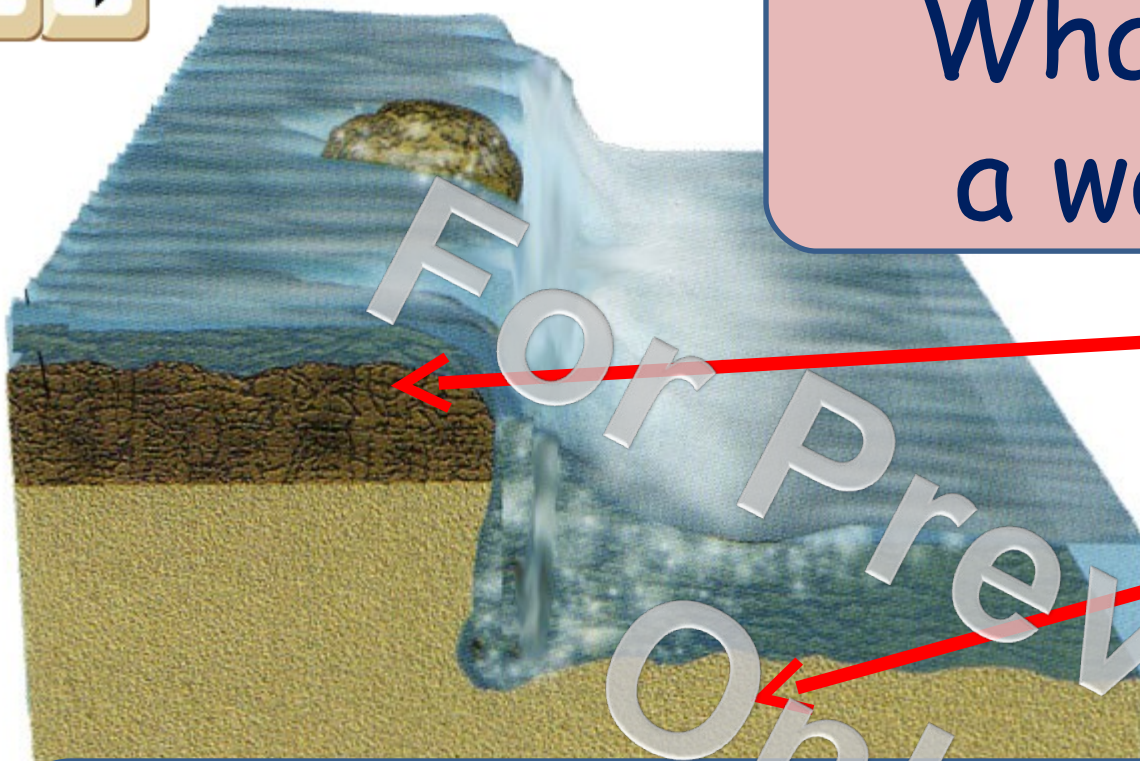


Gentle drops of water over rocky steps are called cascades, while larger amounts of water are cataracts.

The noise and spray of plunging rivers create amazing natural wonders of the world.



What causes a waterfall?



Hard rock

Soft rock has eroded to form a plunge pool.

When a river flows over hard and soft rock, the soft rock erodes quickly, leaving a shelf of hard rock behind. Then the water drops over the shelf, eroding the soft rock even more. This is how a waterfall is formed.



The Widest Waterfall

On the border of Zimbabwe and Zambia, in Southern Africa, the Zambezi River flows to the brink of a dramatic gorge.



Here it crashes down to create the widest sheet of falling water in the world, The Victoria Falls.



The Highest Waterfall

The highest waterfall in the world is the Angel Falls, named after its discoverer - James Angel.



It's two and a half times taller than the Empire State Building in New York.



Waterfall Facts

Some waterfalls are made by glaciers. Examples of this type of waterfall are the Multnomah Falls in Oregon and the Yosemite Falls in California.

Europe's highest waterfall, Utigard in Norway, is 800 metres high.



Most waterfalls are found in and around mountains. Flat areas of the UK, like Norfolk and Lincolnshire, don't have any waterfalls.

The most visited waterfall is the Niagara Falls. Every year nearly 30 million people visit the falls.