

List O - Geographic terms



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List O-1 Geographic terms- hierarchical list

List O-2 U.S. Physiographic map

General notes

These thesaurus lists, lists A-R, are used by GeoRef indexers for selecting index terms and by searchers for additional information not necessarily found in individual term records in the body of the Thesaurus. In most cases, an hierarchical list is given. In some cases, an alphabetical or other list is provided.

The notes under **Searching** attempt to guide the searcher in the use of the list. Searchers might also read the notes on **Indexing** for further clues but should be aware that these notes reflect current practice which in some cases differs from past practice. Further notes on specific terms are in the body of the Thesaurus and additional notes on searching are in the GeoRef Thesaurus, 11th edition Introduction section on searching beginning on page x. Information specific to searching and the individual list topics is included, e.g., a section on geographic locations begins on page xii.

Under **Indexing** the current indexing practice is given. These notes should be read along with the instructions under the individual terms in the body of the Thesaurus.

Geographic terms

The hierarchical list includes terms for large regions, continents, countries, large subdivisions of some countries, and large bodies of water. Within the list, the terms for land areas are separate from the terms for water bodies (oceans and large seas), with the water bodies at the end of the list. Under each continent, physiographic regions are listed separately from countries, with the physiographic regions first. Following the continents are lists for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, miscellaneous regions or land areas, large island groups, and then ocean areas.

In addition to the terms in the list, thousands of terms exist for smaller geographic areas. The more common of these terms have been added to the Thesaurus, based on frequency of use in GeoRef indexing when given in the cited document. When one of the specific localities is indexed, a broader term from List O is also indexed.

Most Chinese geographic terms are transliterated according to the Pinyin transliteration. See individual terms for history of usage. Geographic locations are key factors in most geology papers. Since 1978, in addition to the relevant geographic terms, the coordinates of primary areas of papers have been added to GeoRef citations, when those coordinates have been available from the cited document or other sources. These coordinates are latitudes and longitudes defining the boundaries of the areas. This makes it possible to search for particular areas using both geographic terms and coordinates.

The basic geographic unit of the Thesaurus is the country name. In the United States, Australia, Canada, and China, the states and provinces are used; in the United Kingdom, the large subdivisions are used. The directional forms of geographic terms used are terms beginning with "northern", "eastern", "northwestern", "south-central", etc. These terms are often used informally in addition to broader valid terms in indexing, especially in combination with the basic geographic units, e.g. southern Kansas, south-central Ontario, eastern Malawi. They are used with country names elsewhere including Australia and China, with the exception of Great Britain, e.g. southwestern Australia, north-central China, northeastern England.

In GeoRef searching and indexing, terms for cities refer not only to the area within the city limits, but also to the immediately surrounding regions.

Searching

Geographic searching is best achieved by using all variants of an area name including political, physiographic and geologic. It is possible to be as specific as town or county, and as general as country or continent. For oceans and continental margins, it is advisable to use the coordinates as well. For information on searching coordinates, see the instructions for the system you are using.

For geographic terms which were never valid, the searcher must search our current coordinated terms for U.S. cities since 1989, and the city with the state before that date, e.g. Alexandria Virginia; OR Alexandria and Virginia. For cities and administrative areas outside the United States, the search is similar, before 1993 and after, e.g. Keswick AND Great Britain; OR Keswick England; Cherepovets AND USSR; OR Cherepovets Russian Federation. Users searching the former Soviet republics, may retrieve material going back to 1978 by searching on the modern country name, e.g. Russian Federation. However, they are cautioned that USSR was treated as the country name before 1993 and that the constituent republics may not have been indexed for all records. Since 1992, the term USSR is generally only used for older articles on the whole former Soviet Union territory. Since 2007, Yugoslavia has also been used for older articles where individual republics cannot be determined. Consult the entry for the country to determine variations of the form.

It is not necessary to search for all the narrower terms of a continent (or United States, Canada, or Australia) or other major area term. For further information on specific terms see the main body of the Thesaurus.

Indexing

The minimum level of indexing required for geography is the name of the country (state or province in the United States, Australia and Canada; main political subdivision in the United Kingdom) or the major water body. If none of the above is applicable, use major island groups, continents, oceans, or large regions. In addition, specific geographic terms should be used as supplementary terms. In the U.S. counties should be included up to 10.

Physiographic regions should be included if they can be determined. Use the U.S. physiographic map.

The geographic terms in bold in the hierarchical list are the minimum level of indexing required. Each reference containing geographic indexing must include either one of these terms or terms that will autopost one of these terms. When indexing large water bodies which are near land, it is useful to also index the country, state, or province. For specific areas adjacent to the coast, smaller divisions such as a U.S. county may also be used.

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