

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Dividing Oceans

About 70% of the Earth is covered in ocean water. An ocean is defined as a large body of salt water. Although most people think of the ocean water as being several separate oceans, in actuality all of the ocean water on Earth is interconnected. This is often called the global ocean. The idea of naming and dividing the global ocean is merely a formality used to help people better organize and understand Earth's major bodies of water.

There are many ways to divide and demarcate the ocean water on Earth's surface. Oftentimes, scientists will refer to Earth's ocean water as one, three, four, five, or seven different oceans. The most common method for dividing and naming the global ocean acknowledges five major oceans: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic, and Southern. This method observes the seven continents as the boundaries between the oceans.

Though the ocean water is linked together, the ocean regions are quite different from one another in temperature, composition, and aquatic life. Furthermore, each ocean area contains seas, gulfs, bays, and straits that also help differentiate the ocean water. Dividing and naming Earth's ocean water is helpful in studying ocean characteristics to better understand the Earth.

