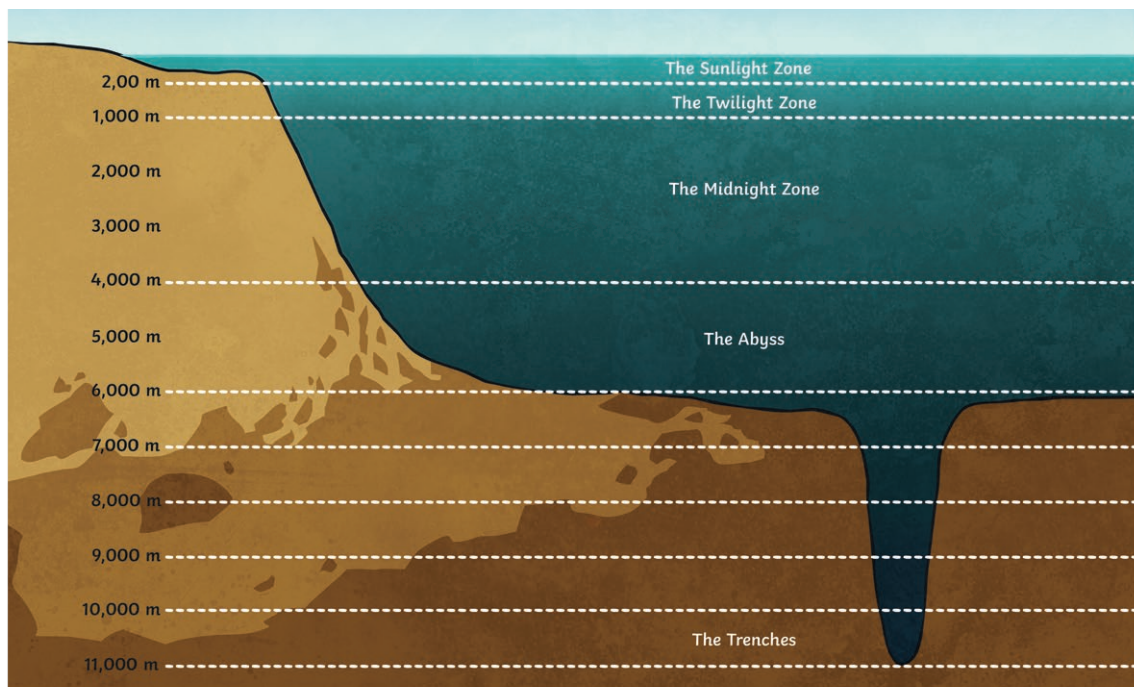


Layers of the Ocean

Oceans cover two-thirds of our Earth. There are five main oceans which all flow into each other: the Arctic Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Southern or Antarctic Ocean.

What Are the Layers of the Ocean?

Oceans are made of five layers or depths. Each layer has different characteristics, such as the temperature and the amount of light. They have unique creatures living within them.



The Sunlight Zone – up to 200m below the surface of the ocean

There is plenty of sunlight and heat in this zone although both decrease as you go deeper. There are many different living things within this layer, including:



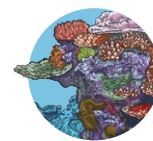
seaweed



dolphins



fish



coral reefs

Humans enjoy this warm layer for activities such as swimming and fishing.

The Twilight Zone – up to 1,000m below the surface of the ocean

Only faint sunrays reach this deeper layer. No plants grow within this layer. It is home to sea animals which often have large eyes, including:

- the sea cucumber;
- the swordfish;
- the wolf eel;
- the octopus.

Humans can dive to this layer wearing protective suits.



The Midnight Zone – up to 4,000m below the surface of the ocean

The Midnight Zone is pitch-black because sunlight cannot reach this layer. Some light can be seen from creatures that make their own light, such as:

- anglerfish;
- viperfish;
- jellyfish.

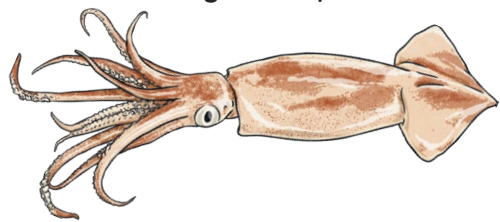


Some creatures, such as the sperm whale, dive to these depths to hunt for food.

Abyss – up to 6,000m below the surface of the ocean

The sunlight cannot reach this layer at all so it is pitch-black and near freezing. Very few creatures live here but those that do are mainly transparent, blind invertebrates, such as:

- lanternfish;
- amphipod;
- squid



The Trenches – up to 11,000m below the surface of the ocean

The Trenches are narrow, underwater valleys of the ocean floor which have high pressure and near-freezing temperatures. There is no natural light in this zone but different creatures can be found, such as sea stars.

Did You Know...?

The deepest part of the ocean ever to be explored by humans is the Mariana Trench. It is almost 11,000m deep! Specialist scientific equipment had to be used.

Questions

1. How much of the Earth do oceans cover? Tick one.

- ☐ one-third
- ☐ two-thirds
- ☐ three-quarters
- ☐ half

2. Match each layer of the ocean to its depth below the surface.

Sunlight Zone	up to 11,000m
Midnight Zone	up to 4,000m
The Trenches	up to 200m

3. In the Sunlight Zone, what do humans enjoy doing? Tick **two**.

- ☐ diving
- ☐ fishing
- ☐ swimming
- ☐ warming up

4. Which of these is **not** a creature you might find in the Abyss? Tick one.

- ☐ sperm whale
- ☐ sea stars
- ☐ amphipod
- ☐ squid

5. Fill in the missing words in this sentence:

The Trenches are narrow, underwater _____ of the ocean floor which have high _____ and near _____ temperatures.

6. Give **two** examples of creatures found in the Midnight Zone.

1. _____

2. _____

7. Which layer would you most like to visit? Give **two** reasons.
