



ODISHA EXAM TRICK

6 Physiographic Divisions of India

MAP • FEATURES • SUB-DIVISIONS

EXAM-FOCUSED GEOGRAPHY NOTES

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The Six Major Physiographic Divisions

- 1. Northern and Northeastern Mountains
- 2. Northern Plains
- 3. Peninsular Plateau
- 4. Great Indian Desert
- 5. Coastal Plains
- 6. Islands

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Northern and Northeastern Mountains are also commonly called the Himalayan Mountains or the Himalayas.
- Boundaries and internal divisions may vary slightly between geography sources, especially for the Peninsular Plateau and Coastal Plains.
- These notes focus on the six major divisions; finer sub-divisions can be studied separately.

1. Northern and Northeastern Mountains

The Northern and Northeastern Mountains form the northernmost physiographic region of India. This region is mainly represented by the Himalayan mountain system and continues eastward into the Purvanchal hills.

The Himalayas are geologically young fold mountains. They are among the highest and most rugged mountain systems in the world. They also form a natural barrier and strongly influence India's climate and drainage.

Key Features

- They are geologically young fold mountains.
- The mountain system stretches from the Indus region in the west towards the Brahmaputra in the east.
- The region contains several parallel mountain ranges separated by deep valleys.
- Towards the east, the Himalayan system continues into the Purvanchal hills.

MEMORY TRICK: Mountains → Young Fold Mountains

2. Northern Plains

The Northern Plains, also known as the Indo-Gangetic-Brahmaputra Plains, were built over time by sediments deposited by the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems and their tributaries.

Covering about 7 lakh sq km, these plains are highly fertile and support a very large population. Their flat terrain also makes them especially suitable for agriculture.

Key Features

- Developed through prolonged river deposition.
- Mainly covered by fertile alluvial soil.
- Broad and level terrain makes the region favourable for agriculture.
- One of India's most densely populated physiographic regions.

MEMORY TRICK: Plains → Alluvial Soil + Fertility

3. Peninsular Plateau

The Peninsular Plateau is an ancient tableland made largely of old crystalline, igneous and metamorphic rocks. It is one of India's most stable landmasses.

The plateau is broadly divided into the Central Highlands and the Deccan Plateau. Important smaller plateau regions include the Malwa, Bundelkhand, Chota Nagpur, Telangana and Karnataka plateaus.

Key Features

- Represents one of India's oldest and most stable landforms.
- Mainly composed of hard crystalline rocks.
- Characterised by broad, shallow valleys and rounded hills.
- Rich in mineral resources and important for industrial development.
- Rivers flowing through the region drain towards both the east and the west.

MEMORY TRICK: Plateau → Ancient + Stable + Minerals

4. Great Indian Desert

The Great Indian Desert lies to the west of the Aravalli Hills. It is mainly an undulating sandy region marked by sand dunes and very limited rainfall.

Annual rainfall is below 150 mm in this region, resulting in sparse vegetation. Luni is the principal large river associated with the desert region.

Key Features

- It is an arid region receiving very little rainfall.
- The landscape is dominated by sand and dunes.
- Vegetation is sparse because of the dry conditions.
- Luni is the main river of the region.

MEMORY TRICK: Desert → Arid + Sand Dunes + Luni

5. Coastal Plains

The Coastal Plains are low-lying strips of land located between the sea and the coastal mountain ranges. They occur along both the Arabian Sea on the west and the Bay of Bengal on the east.

The Western Coastal Plains are generally narrower and lie between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. The Eastern Coastal Plains are broader in many places and contain important river delta regions.

Key Features

- Form narrow low-lying belts along India's eastern and western coasts.
- The Western Coastal Plains include the Konkan, Kanara and Malabar sections.
- The Eastern Coastal Plains include the Utkal, Andhra and Tamil Nadu plains.
- The eastern coast is broader in many areas and is known for major river deltas.
- These regions are important for agriculture, ports, fisheries and trade.

MEMORY TRICK: Coasts → Deltas + Ports + Trade

6. Islands

India has two major island groups: Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

Lakshadweep consists of coral islands located close to the Malabar coast. The Andaman & Nicobar group is larger and more widely scattered, and it has considerable strategic importance.

Key Features

- India's major island groups are Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar.
- Lakshadweep is primarily of coral origin.
- Andaman & Nicobar have important strategic significance.
- Both island groups support rich biodiversity.

MEMORY TRICK: Islands → Coral + Strategic Importance

Quick Comparison — Six Physiographic Divisions

Division	Location / Identity	Remember
Northern & Northeastern Mountains	Northern India; Himalayas + Purvanchal	Young fold mountains; major river sources; climatic barrier
Northern Plains	Between Himalayas and Peninsular Plateau	Flat, fertile alluvial plains; dense population
Peninsular Plateau	Central and southern India	Ancient stable landmass; crystalline rocks; minerals
Great Indian Desert	Western India; west of Aravallis	Arid sandy landscape; dunes; Luni
Coastal Plains	Arabian Sea + Bay of Bengal coasts	Western/Eastern plains; deltas; ports; fisheries
Islands	Lakshadweep + Andaman & Nicobar	Coral Lakshadweep; strategic Andaman & Nicobar

Why These Divisions Matter

Each physiographic division has a distinct role in India's physical geography and economic life. Mountains provide major water and forest resources; the Northern Plains support intensive agriculture and large populations; the Peninsular Plateau is important for mineral resources; while coastal areas and islands support ports, fisheries, trade and biodiversity.

One-Line Revision

Mountains: Young fold mountains
Northern Plains: Fertile alluvial plains
Peninsular Plateau: Ancient and mineral-rich
Great Indian Desert: Arid sandy region
Coastal Plains: Deltas, ports and trade
Islands: Coral + strategic importance

EXAM MEMORY CHAIN
Mountains → Plains → Plateau → Desert → Coasts → Islands