

Landscape

A landscape includes the physical elements of geophysically defined [landforms](#) such as (ice-capped) [mountains](#), [hills](#), [water bodies](#) such as [rivers](#), [lakes](#), ponds and the [sea](#), living elements of [land cover](#) including indigenous [vegetation](#), human elements including different forms of [land use](#), buildings and [structures](#), and transitory elements such as [lighting](#) and [weather](#) conditions.

Combining both their physical origins and the [cultural](#) overlay of human presence, often created over millennia, landscapes reflect a living synthesis of people and place that is vital to local and [national identity](#). The character of a landscape helps define the self-image of the people who inhabit it and a sense of place that differentiates one region from other regions. It is the dynamic backdrop to people's lives. Landscape can be as varied as farmland, a [landscape park](#), or [wilderness](#).

The [earth](#) has a vast range of landscapes, including the icy landscapes of [polar regions](#), [mountainous](#) landscapes, vast arid [desert](#) landscapes, [islands](#) and [coastal](#) landscapes, densely [forested](#) or [wooded](#) landscapes including past [boreal forests](#) and [tropical rainforests](#), and [agricultural](#) landscapes of [temperate](#) and [tropical](#) regions.

Definition and etymology

There are several definitions of what constitutes a landscape, depending on context. In common usage however, a landscape refers either to all the visible features of an area of land (usually rural), often considered in terms of [aesthetic](#) appeal, or to a pictorial representation of an area of countryside, specifically within the genre of [landscape painting](#). When people deliberately improve the aesthetic appearance of a piece of land—by changing contours and vegetation, etc.—it is said to have been [landscaped](#),^[1] though the result may not constitute a landscape according to some definitions.

The word *landscape* (*landscipe* or *landscaef*) arrived in [England](#)—and therefore into the [English language](#)—after the fifth century, following the arrival of the [Anglo-Saxons](#); these terms referred to a system of human-made spaces on the land. The term *landscape* emerged around the turn of the sixteenth century to denote a painting whose primary subject matter was natural scenery.^[2] *Land* (a word from Germanic origin) may be taken in its sense of something to which people belong (as in England being the land of the English).^[3] The suffix *-scape* is equivalent to the more common English suffix *-ship*.^[3] The roots of *-ship* are etymologically akin to Old English *sceppan* or *scyppan*, meaning to *shape*. The suffix *-schaft* is related to the verb *schaffen*, so that *-ship* and *shape* are also etymologically linked. The modern form of the word, with its connotations of scenery, appeared in the late sixteenth century when the term *landschap* was introduced by Dutch painters who used it to refer to paintings of inland natural or rural scenery. The word *landscape*, first recorded in 1598, was borrowed from a Dutch painters' term.^[4] The popular conception of the *landscape* that is reflected in dictionaries conveys both a particular and a general meaning, the particular referring to an area of the Earth's surface and the general being that which can be seen by an observer. An example of this second usage can be found as early as 1662 in the [Book of Common Prayer](#):

Geomorphology: The physical evolution of landscape

[Geomorphology](#) is the scientific study of the origin and evolution of [topographic](#) and [bathymetric](#) features created by physical or chemical processes operating at or near Earth's surface.

Geomorphologists seek to understand why landscapes look the way they do, to understand landform history and dynamics and to predict changes through a combination of field observations, physical experiments and [numerical modeling](#). Geomorphology is practiced within [physical geography](#), [geology](#), [geodesy](#), [engineering geology](#), [archaeology](#) and [geotechnical engineering](#). This broad base of interests contributes to many research styles and interests within the field.^[7]

The surface of [Earth](#) is modified by a combination of surface processes that sculpt landscapes, and geologic processes that cause [tectonic uplift](#) and [subsidence](#), and shape the [coastal geography](#). Surface processes comprise the action of [water](#), [wind](#), [ice](#), [fire](#), and living things on the surface of the Earth, along with chemical reactions that form [soils](#) and alter material properties, the stability and rate of change of [topography](#) under the force of [gravity](#), and other factors, such as (in the very recent past) human alteration of the landscape. Many of these factors are strongly mediated by [climate](#). Geologic processes include the uplift of [mountain ranges](#), the growth of [volcanoes](#), [isostatic](#) changes in land surface elevation (sometimes in response to surface processes), and the formation of deep [sedimentary basins](#) where the surface of Earth drops and is filled with material [eroded](#) from other parts of the landscape. The Earth surface and its topography therefore are an intersection of climatic, [hydrologic](#), and [biologic](#) action with geologic processes.

List of different types of landscape

[Desert](#), [Plain](#), [Taiga](#), [Tundra](#), [Wetland](#), [Mountain](#), [Mountain range](#), [Cliff](#), [Coast](#), [Littoral zone](#), [Glacier](#), [Polar regions of Earth](#), [Shrubland](#), [Forest](#), [Rainforest](#), [Woodland](#), [Jungle](#), Moors.

According to [Richard Forman](#) and [Michael Godron](#),^[14] a landscape is a heterogeneous land area composed of a cluster of interacting ecosystems that is repeated in similar form throughout, whereby they list woods, meadows, marshes and villages as examples of a landscape's ecosystems, and state that a landscape is an area at least a few kilometres wide. [John A. Wiens](#)^[15] opposes the traditional view expounded by [Carl Troll](#), Isaak S. Zonneveld, Zev Naveh, Richard T. T. Forman/Michel Godron and others that landscapes are arenas in which humans interact with their environments on a kilometre-wide scale; instead, he defines 'landscape'—regardless of scale—as "the template on which spatial patterns influence ecological processes".^[16] Some define 'landscape' as an area containing two or more [ecosystems](#) in close proximity.^[17]

Integrated landscape management

[Integrated landscape management](#) is a way of managing a landscape that brings together multiple stakeholders, who collaborate to integrate policy and practice for their different land use objectives, with the purpose of achieving sustainable landscapes.^{[18][19]} It recognises that, for example, one river basin can supply water for towns and agriculture, timber and food crops for smallholders and industry, and habitat for biodiversity; the way in which each one of these sectors pursues its goals can have

impacts on the others. The intention is to minimise conflict between these different land use objectives and [ecosystem services](#).^[19] This approach draws on landscape ecology, as well as many related fields that also seek to integrate different land uses and users, such as [watershed management](#).^[18]

Proponents of integrated landscape management argue that it is well-suited to address complex global challenges, such as those that are the focus of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).^[20] Integrated landscape management is increasingly taken up at the national,^{[21][22]} local^[23] and international level, for example the [UN Environment Programme](#) states that "UNEP champions the landscape approach de facto as it embodies the main elements of integrated ecosystem management".

Landscape archaeology

Landscape archaeology or [landscape history](#) is the study of the way in which humanity has changed the physical appearance of the environment - both present and past. Landscape generally refers to both natural environments and environments constructed by human beings.^[24] [Natural landscapes](#) are considered to be environments that have not been altered by humans in any shape or form.^[25] [Cultural landscapes](#), on the other hand, are environments that have been altered in some manner by people (including temporary structures and places, such as campsites, that are created by human beings).^[26] Among archaeologists, the term landscape can refer to the meanings and alterations people mark onto their surroundings.^{[26][27]} As such, landscape archaeology is often employed to study the human use of land over extensive periods of time.^{[27][28]} Landscape archaeology can be summed up by Nicole Branton's statement:

"the landscapes in landscape archaeology may be as small as a single household or garden or as large as an empire", and "although resource exploitation, class, and power are frequent topics of landscape archaeology, landscape approaches are concerned with spatial, not necessarily ecological or economic, relationships. While similar to settlement archaeology and ecological archaeology, landscape approaches model places and spaces as dynamic participants in past behavior, not merely setting (affecting human action), or artifact (affected by human action)".^[24]

Human conceptions and representations of landscape

Landscape gardens

The [Chinese garden](#) is a landscape garden style which has evolved over three thousand years. It includes both the vast gardens of the Chinese emperors and members of the Imperial Family, built for pleasure and to impress, and the more intimate gardens created by scholars, poets, former government officials, soldiers and merchants, made for reflection and escape from the outside world. They create an idealized miniature landscape, which is meant to express the harmony that should exist between man and nature.^[38] A typical Chinese garden is enclosed by walls and includes one or more ponds, [scholar's rocks](#), trees and flowers, and an assortment of halls and pavilions within the garden, connected by winding paths and zig-zag galleries. By moving from structure to structure, visitors can view a series of carefully composed scenes, unrolling like a scroll of landscape paintings.^[39]

The [English landscape garden](#), also called English landscape park or simply the 'English garden', is a style of parkland garden intended to look as though it might be a natural landscape, although it may be very extensively re-arranged. It emerged in England in the early 18th century, and spread across Europe, replacing the more formal, symmetrical [jardin à la française](#) of the 17th century as the principal style for large parks and gardens in Europe.^[40] The English garden (and later [French landscape garden](#)) presented an idealized view of nature. It drew inspiration from paintings of landscapes by [Claude Lorraine](#) and [Nicolas Poussin](#), and from the classic [Chinese gardens](#) of the East,^[41] which had recently been described by European travellers and were realized in the Anglo-Chinese garden,^[41] and the philosophy of [Jean-Jacques Rousseau](#) (1712 – 1778).

The English garden usually included a lake, sweeps of gently rolling lawns set against groves of trees, and recreations of classical temples, Gothic ruins, bridges, and other picturesque architecture, designed to recreate an idyllic pastoral landscape. The work of [Lancelot "Capability" Brown](#) and [Humphry Repton](#) was particularly influential. By the end of the 18th century the English garden was being imitated by the French landscape garden, and as far away as St. Petersburg, Russia, in [Pavlovsk](#), the gardens of the future [Emperor Paul](#). It also had a major influence on the form of the [public parks](#) and gardens which appeared around the world in the 19th century.^[42]

Landscape architecture

[Landscape architecture](#) is a multi-disciplinary field, incorporating aspects of [botany](#), [horticulture](#), the [fine arts](#), [architecture](#), [industrial design](#), [geology](#) and the [earth sciences](#), [environmental psychology](#), [geography](#), and [ecology](#). The activities of a landscape architect can range from the creation of public parks and parkways to site planning for campuses and corporate office parks, from the design of residential estates to the design of civil [infrastructure](#) and the management of large [wilderness](#) areas or [reclamation](#) of degraded landscapes such as mines or [landfills](#). Landscape architects work on all types of structures and external space – large or small, [urban](#), [suburban](#) and [rural](#), and with "hard" (built) and "soft" (planted) materials, while paying attention to ecological [sustainability](#).

For the period before 1800, the history of landscape gardening (later called landscape architecture) is largely that of master planning and [garden design](#) for [manor houses](#), [palaces](#) and royal properties, religious complexes, and centers of government. An example is the extensive work by [André Le Nôtre](#) at [Vaux-le-Vicomte](#) and at the [Palace of Versailles](#) for King [Louis XIV of France](#). The first person to write of making a landscape was [Joseph Addison](#) in 1712. The term landscape architecture was invented by [Gilbert Laing Meason](#) in 1828 and was first used as a professional title by [Frederick Law Olmsted](#) in 1863. During the latter 19th century, the term [landscape architect](#) became used by professional people who designed landscapes. [Frederick Law Olmsted](#) used the term 'landscape architecture' as a profession for the first time when designing [Central Park](#), [New York City](#), US. Here the combination of traditional landscape gardening and the emerging field of city planning gave landscape architecture its unique focus. This use of the term landscape architect became established after [Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.](#) and others founded the [American Society of Landscape Architects](#) (ASLA) in 1899.