

Talk About Nature – Visual Vocabulary Video

In this visual vocabulary lesson, you can learn to talk about nature, describe landscapes, and talk about countryside in English. Learn many helpful vocabulary words and phrases you can use in writing and conversation to talk about nature in English.

What does the countryside look like near your home? What kind of landscapes does your country have?

What is a landscape? Learn here: [Landscape meaning](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/landscape)
(<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/landscape>).

Let's see how you can answer these questions when you talk about nature in English.

I grew up in a small village in England. The countryside around there is very typically English: there are fields separated by stone walls or hedgerows, and rolling hills in the distance.

A 'hedge' is something like a wall, or a fence, but made out of plants. A 'hedgerow' is similar, but it's used as a barrier between fields. In Britain, farm fields are often surrounded by hedgerows.

Learn more about Britain with this Oxford Online English lesson: [Tour of London](https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/tour-of-london-english)
(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/tour-of-london-english>).

'Rolling hills' means low hills with gentle slopes.

When I was a student, I studied in Canada for a year. Although it wasn't cold all year, my main memory is of these bleak, wintry landscapes, full of never-ending pine forests.

'Wintry' is the adjective from 'winter'. You heard 'wintry landscapes'; another common collocation is 'wintry weather'.

If you haven't yet, make sure to watch our other visual vocabulary lesson on [Weather Expressions](https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/weather-expressions)
(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/weather-expressions>) to get more phrases to talk about weather.

'Bleak' means empty and cold. It has a negative meaning. Bleak landscapes are not necessarily ugly, but they're often depressing.

After I graduated, I took a road trip across the USA with a friend. It was interesting to see how the landscapes changed as we drove. A lot of the USA is quite flat. There are these huge plains, which go on for miles.

A 'plain' is a large, flat area of land without trees. You can also use the word 'grassland' for a flat area which is covered with grass.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Plains-landscape-scaled.webp>)

Farther south, we passed through mountainous badlands. The mountains there have this weird liquid look, like someone just poured them onto the land. It was a barren region, but beautiful nonetheless.

Have you ever heard the word 'badlands'? It describes a specific type of landscape which is made of soft rock which has been shaped by erosion. Badlands are generally quite bare – without many plants or trees – and often have steep-sided hills.

Before, I used the word 'barren'. Do you know what this means when talking about nature in English?

If something is barren, there are few plants or trees. You could also use the word 'bare', which has a similar meaning here.

We drove through Utah and Monument valley. It's a rocky desert, with these incredible mesas and weird rock formations, like nothing I've seen elsewhere.

You can use the phrase 'rock formation' to refer to an interesting or unusual rock structure.

One example is a mesa, which is a flat-topped rock formation with steep sides.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/mesa-landscape-scaled.webp>)

In California, we visited the redwood forests. Of course, we have forests and woodland in England, but nothing like this. The trees are enormous!

You can use different words for land which is covered with trees. You heard 'forest' and 'woodland'. If you're talking about a tropical forest, you can say 'rainforest' or 'jungle'.

You might also hear 'wood', as in 'There's a small wood next to the river.' Technically, a forest is bigger than a wood, but English speakers sometimes use the words interchangeably.

We finished in Yosemite National Park (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yosemite_National_Park), which is one of the most stunning places I've ever visited. The highlight was this towering waterfall.

You can use the word 'towering' to describe natural features which are tall and impressive. 'Towering' is usually a positive adjective. You can have 'towering mountains', 'towering cliffs', or 'towering trees.'

Now, I live in Germany, in a small town on the banks of a river. The countryside is quite similar to England, with fields, forests, and lots of greenery. It's pretty, at least, when the weather's nice!

Here's a question: what's the difference between 'bank', 'shore' and 'coast'? They all mean a place where the land meets the water, but they're not exactly the same. Do you know the difference?

Generally, you use 'bank' for the sides of rivers.

'Shore' is mostly for lakes; 'coast' is for where the land meets the sea or the ocean, although 'shore' is also possible in some contexts.

Another useful word you heard here is 'greenery'. 'Greenery' means plants in general. It could mean grass, flowers, trees, bushes, or a mix.

If you come to Germany, you should try to visit Neuschwanstein castle. It's in a beautiful setting, perched in the mountains. The landscape all around is incredibly rugged and dramatic.

If you want to describe mountainous terrain which is very steep and rocky, you can use the word 'rugged'.

You can also say 'rugged coastline'.

If you describe landscape as 'dramatic', you mean that it's impressive and beautiful. It's often used for wilder, more remote landscapes, like high mountains.

I like where I live, but my dream is to start my own business and work online, so I could live by the sea, maybe on a Greek island, with sandy beaches and clear, turquoise water.

‘Turquoise’ is a colour between blue and green. It’s not that common in everyday conversation, but if you use it to describe water or the sea, you usually mean that the water looks beautiful.

(<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/turquoise-water-landscape-scaled.webp>)

What about you? If you live in a city, what’s the surrounding countryside like? Are there forests, fields, or mountains? Do you live near the coast?

If you live in the countryside, describe it! Look out of your window; what does the landscape look like?

Think about your answer. You can write it down, say it out loud, or put it in the video comments to practice talking about nature in English. Or, do all three!

That’s all. Thanks for watching!