

Physiographic Regions

Physiography is the shape of the land surface. California has 12 very distinct physiographic **regions**. Most of the state is made up of high mountains and low valleys that **orient** north to south. The Great Central Valley is an enormous and level valley between the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada. More **mountains** and small valleys form the Basin and Range region on the eastern **border**. The Mojave and Sonoran Deserts make up the vast southeast quarter of California. Mountains also rise above the coastline from the Klamath Mountains at the Oregon border, to the Southern Coast Range. A broad **plain** extends along the coast in the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges regions to the southern border with Mexico.



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