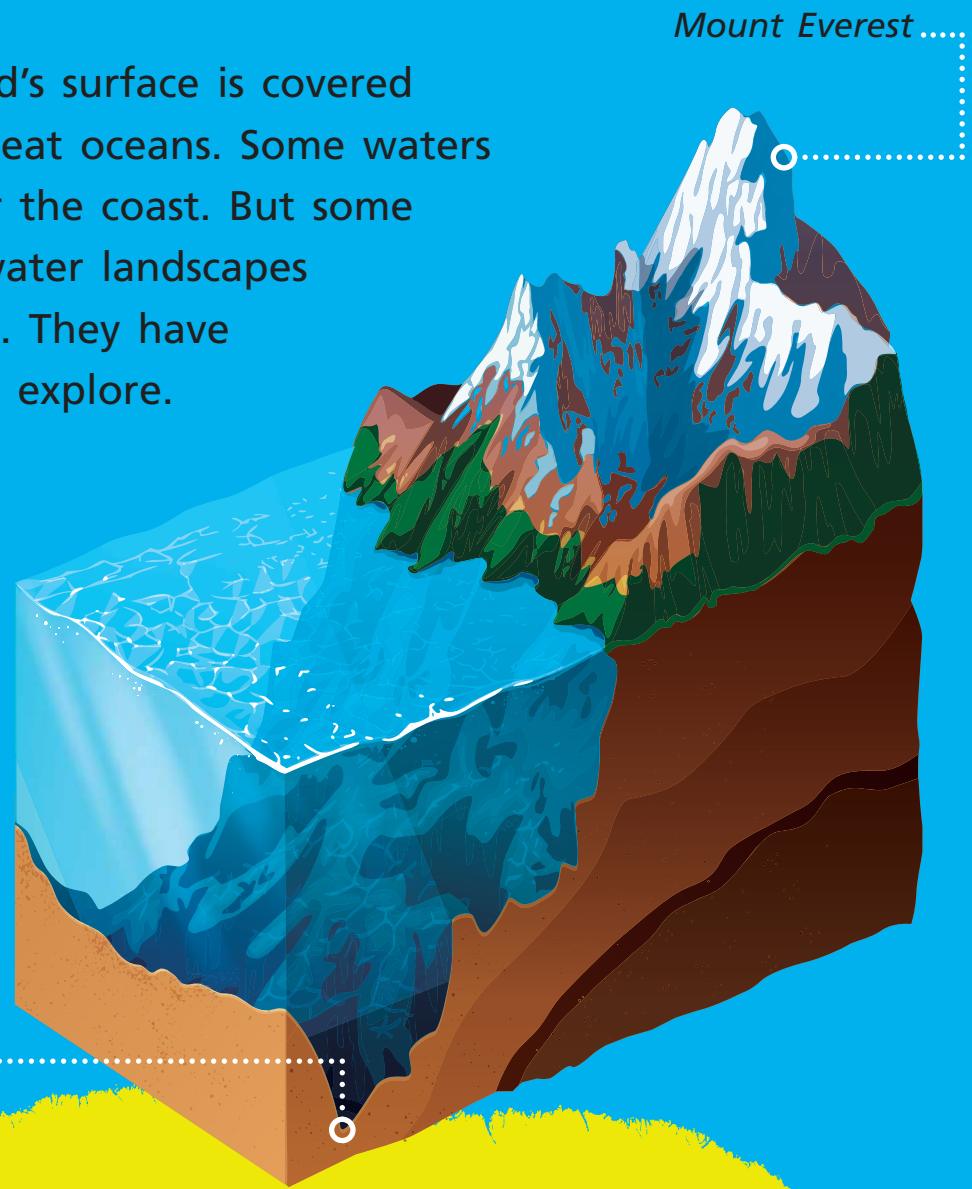


UNDER THE SEA

About three quarters of the world's surface is covered by sea water, most of it in the great oceans. Some waters are very shallow, particularly near the coast. But some are very deep. Wonderful underwater landscapes can be seen in these deep waters. They have fascinating features for people to explore.

The Mariana Trench is the deepest part of the sea in the world. It reaches a depth of 10,994 metres - over 2,000 metres deeper than Mount Everest.



There are amazing things under the sea like **coral reefs**, caves, **canyons**, **marine life**, shipwrecks and even treasure. There are still many things waiting to be discovered. People first started diving so they could visit this underwater. Now diving is popular sport.



TYPES OF DIVING

There are several different ways of diving to explore the world underwater.

Freediving

In freediving, people dive and hold their breath. Until about 200 years ago, this was the only way for human beings to dive. Some people can hold their breath for several minutes. The problem is that most people can't dive for very long without having to come up to the surface to breathe.

FACT

New Zealander William Trubridge held his breath for a world record-breaking 4 minutes and 14 seconds and reached a depth of 102 metres.



Snorkelling

When snorkelling, people wears a face mask to see clearly, and a snorkel to breathe through. A snorkel is a type of tube which takes in air from above the water's surface. This is great for exploring shallow parts of the sea. However, the diver can only breathe at the sea surface, so can't stay underwater for very long, or dive down very deep.

Scuba diving

Scuba divers use an air tank and mask to keep breathing underwater. Then they can stay under for much longer and dive much deeper.



This diver has taken a deep breath through the snorkel and is swimming beneath the surface to have a close look at the coral.