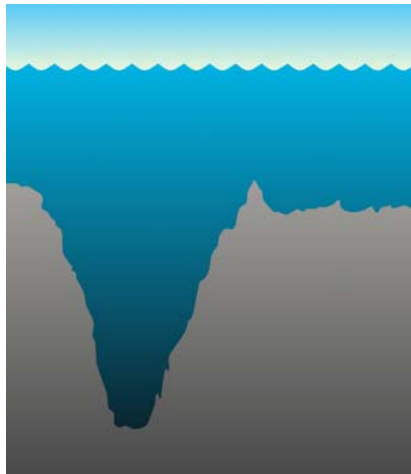


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## The Abyss Below: Unveiling the Secrets of the Deepest Part of the Ocean

Have you ever wondered what lies beneath the surface of the ocean, hidden in the depths where sunlight can never reach? The ocean, covering more than 70% of Earth's surface, holds many mysteries, and one of the most intriguing questions is: How deep is the deepest part of the ocean, and what is it called? In this reading passage, we will embark on an exciting journey to explore the mysteries of the deep sea and uncover the answers to these questions.

The deepest part of the ocean is known as the Mariana Trench. It is located in the western Pacific Ocean and stretches for over 1,500 miles. Imagine a trench so vast that if you placed Mount Everest, the tallest mountain on Earth, into it, the mountain would still be submerged by over a mile of water! That's how deep the Mariana Trench is.

The depth of the Mariana Trench is astonishing. Its deepest point, known as the Challenger Deep, plunges to a staggering depth of approximately 36,070 feet (10,994 meters) below sea level. To put that into perspective, if you were to stack three Empire State Buildings on top of each other, they would still be shorter than the distance to the bottom of the Challenger Deep!

The immense pressure at the bottom of the Mariana Trench is mind-boggling. At this depth, the water exerts a pressure of about 15,750 pounds per square inch (1,100 times greater than the pressure at sea level). This extreme pressure makes it an extremely harsh and challenging environment for any form of life.

Despite the challenging conditions, scientists have made remarkable discoveries in the Mariana Trench. They have found unique and strange creatures that have adapted to survive in this extreme environment. One of the most famous discoveries is the Mariana snailfish, a fish that thrives at depths of over 26,000 feet (7,900 meters). These creatures have special adaptations that allow them to withstand the crushing pressure and freezing temperatures of the trench.

Exploring the Mariana Trench is no easy feat. It requires advanced technology and specialized submersibles designed to withstand the extreme conditions. In 1960, the first manned descent to the Challenger Deep was made by Swiss oceanographer Jacques Piccard and U.S. Navy Lieutenant Don Walsh in the bathyscaphe Trieste. Since then, only a handful of deep-sea expeditions have ventured into the trench.

