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life on earth but they can be deadly as well when used in association with water the term current describes the motion of the water ocean currents are patterns of water movement that influence climate zones and weather patterns around the world they are primarily driven by winds and by seawater density although many other factors including the shape and configuration of the ocean basin they flow through influence them what are ocean currents every full moon ocean today home collections wave safe what are ocean currents in this video find out all about what causes ocean currents show hide transcript introduction with bruckner chase east coast california pacific northwest hawaii american samoa samoan american samoa english vocabulary questions mass flows of water or currents are essential to understanding how heat energy moves between earth's water bodies landmasses and atmosphere the ocean covers 71 percent of the planet and holds 97 percent of its water making the ocean a key factor in the storage and transfer of heat energy across the globe what causes ocean currents ocean currents can be caused by wind density differences in water masses caused by temperature and salinity variations gravity and events such as earthquakes or storms currents are cohesive streams of seawater that circulate through the ocean ocean current stream made up of horizontal and vertical components of the circulation system of ocean waters that is produced by gravity wind friction and water density variation in different parts of the ocean the global ocean current database gocd integrates ocean current data from a wide variety of capture methods resolutions and formats into a single format netcdf archive the gocd is a valuable resource that gives scientists and researchers a comprehensive depiction of global current activity and structure currents tutorial noaa and many other organizations have numerous online resources on ocean currents the following pages are meant to guide educators and students to specific data and information related to content presented in the currents tutorial some of the pages listed below reside within larger sites ocean currents are like giant conveyor belts flowing through the oceans moving huge amounts of water all the time from cold to hot and vice versa oceans transport water the major ocean currents roughly follow a common set of circular paths concept check what is the difference between upwelling and downswelling what occurs in each process how does thermohaline circulation work what is a surface current page 2 of 2 this study guide summarizes the key points of deep ocean currents key points a current is the steady flow of a fluid such as air or water within a larger body of that fluid prevailing winds are air currents that blow mainly in one direction the global pattern of prevailing winds is caused by the uneven heating of earth's surface recognize the use and limitations of models and theories as scientific representations of reality es 6 8 explain the dynamics of oceanic currents including upwelling density and deep water currents the local labrador current and the gulf stream and their relationship to global circulation within the marine environment and climate a rip current is a narrow fast moving channel of water that starts near the beach and extends offshore through the line of breaking waves if you do get caught in a rip current the best thing you can do is stay calm it's not going to pull you underwater it's just going to pull you away from shore call and wave for help

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