

HORIZON

From the Greek *ὀρίζωνκύκλος* [*horizōnkyklos*], "separating the circle", the line of the apparent contact of the sky with the earth's surface.

The concept functions in three contexts: science, art and language (metaphorical uses).

In astronomy, horizon means the boundary between the space visible for observation and the space hidden by the Earth. The geometric horizon assumes an ideally flat and infinite surface of the earth, the real one takes into account the curvature of the earth, while the topographical one takes into account the elements of the topography of the place of observation.

In art (especially in painting and drawing), horizon is an imaginary line running across the image at the height of the observer's eyes, the extremity of the surface accessible to the eye from a specific vantage point. Horizon is linked to the principles of perspective described in the 15th century. In painting and landscape photography it is also a kind of "background" used to display the object or scene presented. In phraseology and language metaphors, the term is found in expressions associated with broadly understood knowledge ("broaden your horizons", "horizons of knowledge", "person with wide horizons", etc.) or indirectly associating knowledge with the properties of the horizon ("from a high point you can see more").

In the context of landscape, the term "horizon" is connected with the idea of view (aesthetics of *the picturesque*) and the composition principle applied since the 18th century in English landscape parks: building the impression of an endless park, stretching all the way to the horizon. The "horizontal" landscape, i.e. stretching across the horizon, is also characteristic of American national parks and open spaces of Arizona, California, New Mexico and American cities, where, in contrast to vertical and tight European buildings, wide and open spaces dominate (Jackson). The horizon may also be a background for a landscape dominant (e.g. hills, trees, ruins, a church or a tower). The suggestive power of the horizon can be enhanced in many ways, for example by changing the vegetation cover. It can be sharpened by not letting it be overgrown with trees, or focus the attention on its individual fragments, leaving barren sections in a wooded area. It can be given a frayed outline by placing on its line various natural and man-made objects (windmills, towers, ruins – a motif often encountered in landscape painting), emphasise by placing a source of light outside it to accentuate the "scenic" value of the sky located directly above it.

According to Casey, there is no landscape without a horizon: the horizon, together with the experiencing and moving subject, are the elements that make up the landscape.

[M. G.]

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