What is a Core?

Ocean drilling samples are recovered in cores, long tubes of material collected while drilling beneath the sea floor. Specific terminology is used to precisely describe the location of a sample taken in a core.

Leg, Expedition – During the history of ocean drilling, the science has been carried out in segments called **legs** during DSDP and ODP and **expeditions** during IODP.

Site, Hole – A **site** is a location at which drilling is conducted. Drill sites are numbered consecutively starting with the first drilled by the *Glomar Challenger* in 1968. If more than one **hole** is drilled at a site, each **hole** receives a different letter suffix (A, B, C, etc).

Core – Each cored interval is usually 9.5 to 9.6 meters and 6 cm in diameter.

Section – A core is cut into **sections** 1.5 meters long, numbered from the top of the core.

Interval – A sample from a core is designated by distance in centimeters from the top of the section to the top and bottom of the sample removed.

A **sample identification number** includes: leg, site, hole, core number, core type, section number, and interval in centimeters measured from the top of section. For example, "210-1276A-3R-3, 80–85 cm" is a sample from the interval 80 to 85 cm below the top of Section 3, Core 3R of Hole 1276A during Leg 210. All ODP core identifiers indicate core type (R = rotary core barrel, H = advanced piston corer, X = extended core barrel, and W = wash core).

Cored intervals can also be described in **meters below sea floor (mbsf)**. The mbsf depth of a sample is determined by adding the depth of the sample below the section top and the lengths of all higher sections in the core to the core-top datum measured with the drill string.

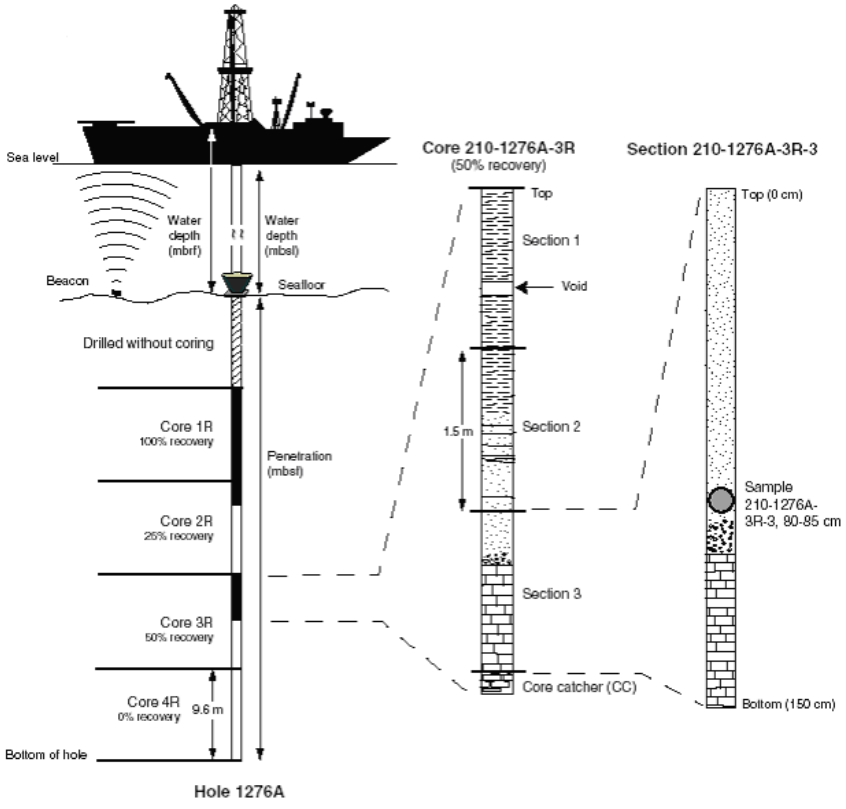

Illustration of core, section, and sample numbering.
From: Shipboard Scientific Party, 2004. Explanatory Notes. In Tucholke, B.E., Sibuet, J.-C., Klaus, A., et al., Proc. ODP, Init. Repts., 210, *1–358.*

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