Great Lakes mini-quiz

Circle one answer per question. One point each. Keep page 2 for checking.

Name / team: _____ Score: _____ / 10

1. How many lakes are conventionally called the Great Lakes?

A. Seven
B. Five
C. Four
D. Six

2. Which Great Lake has the largest surface area?

A. Michigan
B. Erie
C. Ontario
D. Superior

3. Which Great Lake is the deepest?

A. Superior
B. Huron
C. Erie
D. Michigan

4. Which Great Lake is entirely within the United States?

A. Huron
B. Ontario
C. Michigan
D. Superior

5. Which Great Lake has the smallest surface area?

A. Michigan
B. Ontario
C. Erie
D. Huron

6. Which Great Lake is the shallowest on average?

A. Erie
B. Ontario
C. Huron
D. Superior

7. Which Great Lake contains the least water by volume?

A. Ontario
B. Michigan
C. Huron
D. Erie

8. Which Great Lake is second-largest by surface area?

A. Ontario
B. Erie
C. Huron
D. Michigan

9. Which pair is connected at the Straits of Mackinac?

A. Michigan and Huron
B. Erie and Ontario
C. Superior and Erie
D. Ontario and Michigan

10. Which river carries water from Lake Superior toward Lake Huron?

A. St. Lawrence River
B. Chicago River
C. St. Marys River
D. Niagara River

Answer key & explanations

Check the reason as well as the letter. References below support the facts.

1. B — Five. The five conventional names are Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. Lake St. Clair connects part of the system but is not one of the five. [1]

2. D — Superior. Superior covers about 31,700 square miles. This compares the conventional five lakes separately; Michigan and Huron are also connected at the same water level. [1]

3. A — Superior. Superior reaches about 1,332 feet at its deepest point. Maximum depth measures a single deepest location, rather than the average depth across the lake. [1]

4. C — Michigan. Lake Michigan lies entirely within US borders. The other four are shared with Canada. [2]

5. B — Ontario. Ontario has about 7,340 square miles of water surface. Erie is larger in area but much shallower, so Erie holds less water. [1]

6. A — Erie. Erie averages about 62 feet deep. Ontario has a smaller surface area but a much greater average depth, showing why area and depth are different comparisons. [1]

7. D — Erie. Erie holds about 116 cubic miles of water in NOAA's reference table. Its shallow basin gives it less volume than the smaller-surface-area Lake Ontario. [1]

8. C — Huron. Huron has about 23,000 square miles of surface, ahead of Michigan's roughly 22,300. Volume is a different comparison, in which Michigan exceeds Huron. [1, 3]

9. A — Michigan and Huron. Michigan and Huron connect through the Straits of Mackinac and share a surface level. They are conventionally named separately despite this hydrologic connection. [1]

10. C — St. Marys River. The St. Marys River is Superior's outlet toward Huron. Locks near Sault Ste. Marie help ships bypass the river's rapids and elevation change. [1, 4]

Sources & more practice

[1] NOAA — Great Lakes physical characteristics
https://apps.glerl.noaa.gov/coastwatch/webdata/statistic/physical.html

[2] US EPA — Lake Michigan
https://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/lake-michigan

[3] US EPA — Lake Huron
https://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/lake-huron

[4] US Army Corps of Engineers — Soo Locks
https://www.lrd.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/Display/Article/3641904/soo-locks/

Facts checked against these sources on September 30, 2026. Find all 50 questions and fresh online rounds at the Quizpen link below.