

How Do Mountains Form?



Mountain Ranges

Mountain ranges have formed on our planet due to movement of the Earth's tectonic plates.

The Earth's crust is made up of plates that fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. These plates are moving slowly by just a few centimeters a year.

Mountain ranges form where two plates are moving towards each other. Along the boundaries of these plates, the land buckles and folds and is forced upwards. Land along the boundaries thickens. Often there will be flat land on either side of the mountain range.



Volcanic Mountains

Mountains may also grow as a result of volcanic activity.

Molten rock from deep inside the Earth's mantle is deposited on the Earth's surface when a volcano erupts. When the lava cools it solidifies into new rock.

Over time, repeated eruptions build higher mountains. Eventually, volcanoes may become dormant for long periods of time. They may even become extinct. Vegetation may cover the mountain and the shape of it may change due to erosion.

