

Vocabulary: Plate Tectonics



Vocabulary

- Collisional boundary – a type of *convergent boundary* where two plates bearing continental crust are moving together.
 - The Himalayas were formed by a collision between India and Eurasia.
- Convergent boundary – a boundary between plates that are moving toward each other.
 - Convergent boundaries include collisional boundaries and *subduction zones*.
- Crust – the rocky outer layer of Earth.
 - Oceanic crust is about 10 km thick, while continental crust is up to 50 km thick.
- Divergent boundary – a boundary between plates that are moving away from each other.
 - New crust is created in a divergent boundary.
 - Divergent boundaries on the ocean floor result in long mountain ranges called *mid-ocean ridges*.
- Earthquake – shaking and vibration of Earth's surface.
 - Most earthquakes are caused by the sudden movement of plates along plate boundaries.
- Lithosphere – the rigid upper layer of the Earth.
 - The lithosphere consists of the crust and the upper part of the mantle.
- Mantle – the layer of Earth between the crust and the core.
 - The mantle extends from 2,900 km below Earth's surface to the base of the crust. It is the largest of Earth's layers.
 - The mantle is composed of solid and partially molten rock that is rich in magnesium and iron.
- Plate – a rigid section of Earth's crust that moves very slowly.
 - Earth's crust is divided into approximately 15 plates.
- Plate tectonics – the movement of plates that make up the surface of Earth.
- Subduction zone – a convergent boundary where one plate is sliding beneath another.
- Transform boundary – a boundary between plates that are sliding past one another.
- Volcano – an opening in Earth's crust from which lava, gas, and ash erupt.
 - Often the erupted material will form a mountain.

