



Earth Materials



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by Linda Cernak

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Water on Earth

Water and land cover Earth, but there is more water on Earth than land. Water covers most of Earth's surface. Water makes up oceans. Water is found in lakes and ponds. Water is found in rivers and streams. Glaciers are made of water. Water is necessary for life on Earth.



A photo of Earth shows more water in blue than land.

The Oceans

Oceans hold most of Earth's water. There are four main oceans on Earth. All of the oceans are connected. They form one big ocean.

Oceans are made of salt water. Some animals and plants can live in salty water. But people cannot drink salty ocean water. Land animals cannot drink salty ocean water. It would make them very sick.

Earth has four oceans that connect.



Fresh Water on Earth

People and land animals can drink fresh water. Only a small amount of Earth's water is fresh water. Rivers and streams are fresh water. Most lakes are fresh water, too.

When rain falls, it helps fill lakes. It helps fill creeks and streams. It helps fill rivers. Water follows a path. Water from creeks flows into streams. Water from streams flows into rivers. Rivers flow toward the ocean. They move water to the oceans.

Lakes are filled with more water after it rains.



Frozen Water on Earth

Glaciers are very large chunks of ice. They start out as snow. The snow builds up over time. Gradually the snow mounds become huge ice mounds. These glaciers slowly creep over the land. They change Earth's surface as they move. Millions of years ago, glaciers covered much of the United States. They carved many lakes and valleys.

Glaciers are made of fresh water.

Crosscutting
Concept

Think about the fresh water in your area. Where is it found?

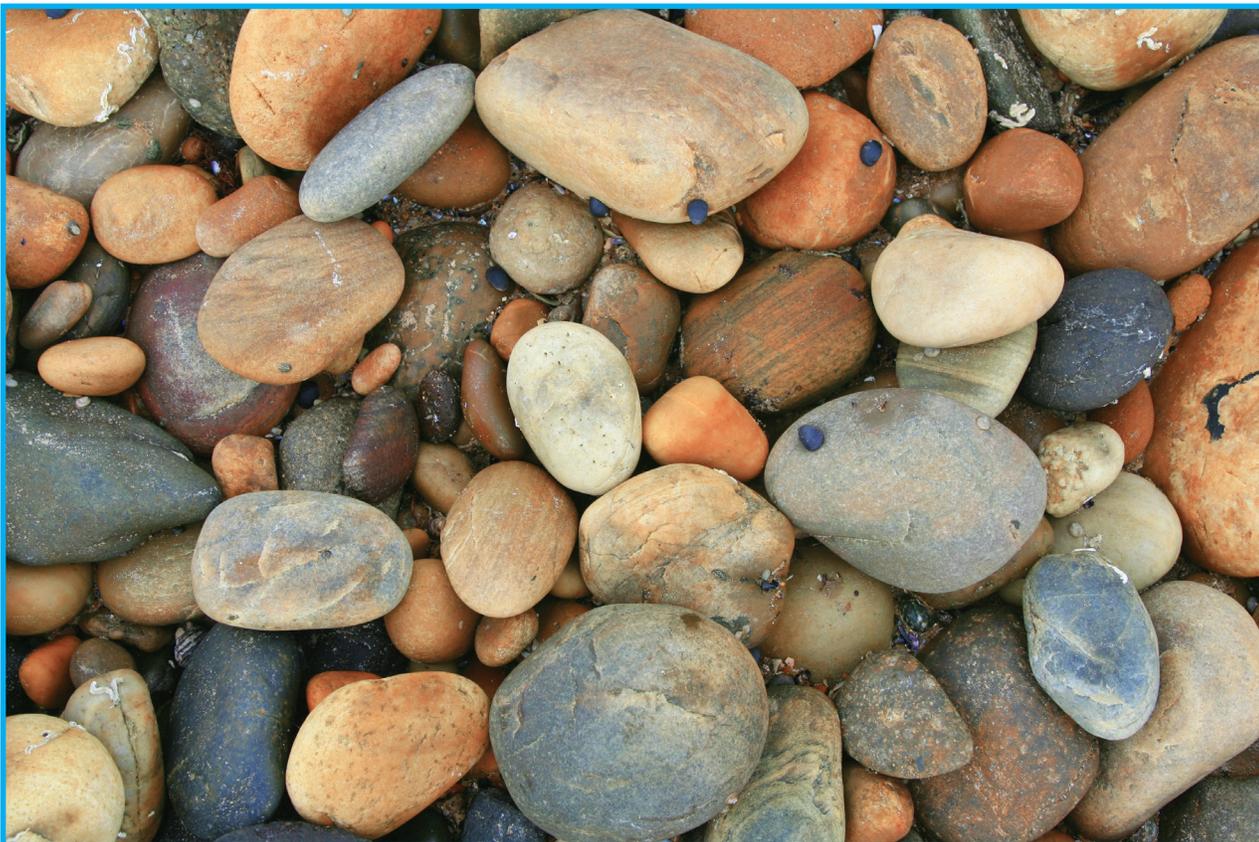


Science and Engineering Practices

Investigate!

Gather some rocks near your home or school.
Study each rock.

1. What different colors do you see?
2. What patterns do you see?
3. How are the rocks alike? How are they different?
4. What do the rocks feel like? Are they smooth or rough?
5. What do the rocks look like? Are they shiny or dull?
6. What are some ways you can sort the rocks?



Careers

Geologist

Geologists study Earth. They study rocks and minerals. They gather facts about landforms. Geologists learn about the forces that shape Earth.

Would I like this career?	<p>You might like this career if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• you like to study nature.• you like to be outdoors.
What would I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You would study how rocks are formed.• You would study landforms.
How can I prepare for this career?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study science and math.• Develop skills in gathering facts.



Glossary

erosion	a change caused by water, wind, or ice moving dirt, sand, and broken rock to another place Beaches can be worn away by erosion.
glaciers	large mounds of ice Many glaciers are in Alaska.
landforms	features that make up Earth's surface Mountains and hills are landforms.
mineral	a solid object that forms crystals Rocks are made up of different minerals.
oceans	large bodies of salt water Most of Earth's water is in its oceans.
plains	large, flat areas of land that do not have many trees Many animals eat grass in the plains.
plateau	an area of flat land that is higher than the land around it The sides of the cliff led to the top of the plateau.
rocks	hard pieces of Earth made of minerals Rock makes up most of Earth's land.
soil	a mixture of small bits of rock and living things Plants grow in the soil.
weathering	a process in which rocks are broken apart by water, wind, and ice Weathering from heavy rain broke apart the large rocks.

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