

Our Ever-Changing Environment



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Changing Earth

Look at the world around you. What do you see? Maybe you see trees, birds, and blue skies. Maybe you see roads, cars, and buildings. Some of these things are natural, while others were made by humans. Earth did not always look the way it does today. Earth has been in the making for a very long time. Our planet has been changing for billions of years. Yes, *billions* of years—4.5 billion years to be exact!



Our planet started as a lumpy mass of rock. For millions of years, this was all there was. Over time, Earth has transformed, or changed. Today, our planet has massive mountains and deep canyons. There are long winding rivers and vast oceans. Natural forces continue to change Earth. Powerful earthquakes move the land, while violent volcanoes erupt to create new land. Rushing waters and gusty winds shape the land. All these forces combine with animals, plants, and people to transform Earth's surface.



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