**Earth Science Regents Review Packet #2: workbook chapters 3-6**

**Evidence of crustal plate movement** (Theory of Plate Tectonics):

1) continents seem to fit together like puzzle pieces

2) rock type and fossils found on continents separated by oceans correlate or match

3) coal found in Antarctica indicates the continent was once closer to the equator; and

4) “magnetic striping”—alignment on either sides of ocean ridges show changes in pole magnetism over time.

There are 3 basic types of **crustal plate boundaries**:

**Divergent** (plates move away from one another);

**Convergent** (plates move toward one another);

**Transform** (plates slide past one another). Most famous transform fault: San Andreas fault in California (See page 5 ESRT).

Earthquakes and volcanoes usually occur **along crustal plate boundaries**.

**Convection cells in the asthenosphere** cause crustal plates to move.

 

Structures formed by plate movement:

**Mid-ocean ridge** – divergent boundary; new crust being created at ridge center; causes sea floor spreading. **Evidence of sea floor spreading**: 1) the reversal of magnetic polarity; 2) the

farther from the center of the ridge, the older the rock (basalt).

 

**Volcanic Islands, Coastal volcanic mountain ranges**—convergent plate boundary. Subduction zone creates ocean trenches.

 

**Hot spots** form more toward the center of plates, not at boundaries between plates. Hot magma plumes break through crust creating volcanoes (Hawaiian Islands, Iceland’s volcanic coast, etc.)

**Ocean crust** is thin, dense, and made of basalt.

**Continental crust** is thick, less dense, and made of granite. (see p.10 of ref. tables)

**Mountains** form by uplift, folding and faulting.

**EARTHQUAKES**

**--occur chiefly at plate boundaries**

An earthquake’s energy is chiefly carried by two different types of waves:

**P-waves (compression waves)** are faster than **S-waves (shear, transverse waves). P-waves can pass through solids & liquids -- S-waves can pass through solids only.**

Seismograms from **a minimum of three seismic stations** are required to determine an earthquake’s

**epicenter. The epicenter** is the spot on Earth’s surface directly above where the earthquake occurred on the plate **(focus).**

**To determine distance from epicenter: subtract P-wave arrival time from S-wave arrival time, and find where the P and S wave graphs are separated by that time difference on the P and S wave chart (page 11 of the ESRT). Then, read the kilometer scale on the X-axis to determine distance from epicenter.**

**To determine travel time: find distance from the epicenter on X-axis and read travel time on the Y-axis for the graphed P and S wave lines. (p. 11 ESRT)**

**To determine origin time of earthquake: subtract travel time for either the P or S wave from the time the wave arrived at a location. For example, if it took the P wave 3 minutes to get to a location, and it arrived at 12:03 PM, then the earthquake occurred at 12:00 PM.**

The **Richter** Scale measures earthquake’s energy intensity on a scale from 1-10. The **Mercalli** Scale measures earthquake damage on a scale from 1-12.

Scientists infer Earth’s internal properties from earthquakes (seismic data) and meteorites.

A **shadow zone, where no P or S waves are detected,** is created when S waves cannot pass through the liquid outer core. P waves, which can travel through the liquid outer core, are bent as they go through Earth.

 

**WEATHERING, EROSION, DEPOSITION**

Weathering breaks large rock into smaller pieces, erosion moves smaller rock pieces to a different place and deposition occurs when the smaller rock pieces are dropped in a different location.

**Physical weathering:** frost action, root/plant action, abrasion, pressure unloading. Frost action occurs in cold, humid climates.

**Chemical weathering**: minerals in rock combine with the atmosphere (oxidation), dissolve or react with water (hydrolysis) or react with acid rain (carbonation). Chemical weathering occurs mostly in warm, humid climates.

When a rock is broken into smaller pieces, **surface area increases** and weathering rate increases.

**Agents of erosion:** **Gravity** is the force behind all erosion. Other agents: **running water** (streams), **wind**, **glaciers**. Running water moves more rock material than the other agents.

**Stream velocity** depends on **slope and discharge** (amount of water in the stream). The greater the slope and discharge, the faster the stream flows.

Stream velocity **increases on the outside curve** of a meander (curve), so streams **erode on the outside of a meander** and **deposit on the inside** of a meander.

 

If a stream is running straight, the stream is fastest in the center just below the surface.

**What streams deposit**: size, density & shape effect deposition. Large, round, and dense particles settle out first and smaller, less dense, flat particles settle farther away from shore (horizontal sorting). Horizontal sorting occurs as the stream slows when entering a larger body of water such as a lake or ocean.

**Graded bedding (vertical sorting)** occurs in quiet water as a stream enters a deep lake: largest,

most dense and roundest sediments are on bottom. Smallest, least dense and flattest sediment on the top.

Sediment deposited **by wind and water are sorted**; those deposited by **gravity (landslides) or glaciers are unsorted.**

**Streams deposits** are sorted, rounded and smooth; streams form **V-shaped valleys**.

**Glacial deposits** are unsorted, angular rock pieces; glaciers form **U-shaped valleys**. Glaciers can make parallel scratches or striations in existing bedrock as they move downhill.

An unsorted pile of material left by a glacier is called **moraine**. Other landscape features formed by glaciers: **drumlins, kettle lakes, glacial erratics**. The Finger Lakes in upstate New York were formed by glaciers.

As glacial ice melts behind the moraine, the water formed flows through the moraine and sorts sediment in front of it. This sorted material is called **glacial outwash**.

**North Shore of LI = moraine; south shore = glacial outwash.**

**Longshore current:** current of sand that runs parallel to the shoreline. When the sand current hits a barrier or a point of land, it slows and deposits sand to form various beach landscapes.

 

**Soil** forms when organic matter (humus—the remains of plants and animals) mixes with weathered rock. Mature soil has 4 horizons or layers:

|  |
| --- |
| Topsoil |
| Subsoil |
| Partially weathered rock |
| Bedrock |

**Landscapes:** **humid climate**: vegetation, smooth, rounded slopes, rolling hills.

**Arid climate**: steep slopes with sharp angles, little vegetation.

 

The **Catskill Mountain** range is really a **dissected plateau**, not mountains. (see p. 2 ESRT)

**Stream drainage patterns** are dependent on bedrock structure and indicate the type of landscape.

 

**INTERPRETING ROCK HISTORY**

Geologists use rock layers found in rock outcrops to interpret Earth’s history. This process is called relative dating, and geologists follow certain principles when forming these interpretations:

**Uniformitaranism**: geologic process occurring today are the same that have occurred throughout Earth’s history.

**Superposition:** if rock layers have not been overturned, the oldest layer is at the bottom of a sequence and the youngest layer any is at the top.

**Original horizontality**: sedimentary rock layers are originally deposited in flat horizontal layers. Folding, faulting, or tilting of sedimentary rock layers occurred after they were formed.

**Cross-cutting relationships:** any igneous intrusion, faulting, or folding is younger than the layers they cut through. Lines showing **contact metamorphism** on rock sequences help show which layers existed before the intrusion.

**Index fossils** found in sedimentary rock can be used to relatively-date rock layers. An index fossil is an organism that had widespread world distribution but lived for a relatively brief time period.

An **unconformity** is a gap in the rock record at an outcrop caused by erosion.

**BE SURE TO REVIEW THE GEOLOGIC HISTORY OF NEW YORK STATE IN THE CENTER OF THE ESRT!!**



**Absolute Dating—Radiometric Dating**

Radioactive elements found in rock can be used to date rock material because radioactive elements decay at a **predictable and unchanging rate**. Changes in temperature, pressure, etc. do not affect the rate of a radioactive element’s decay.

During radioactive decay, the unstable, parent isotope changes into a stable, daughter isotope (see table on front of ESRT). For example, Carbon-14 (radioactive isotope) changes into stable Nitrogen-14.

The **time** it takes for half the mass of a radioactive element to decay into its stable isotope is called a **half-life.** The ratio of radioactive isotope to stable daughter isotope shows how many half-lives the rock material has undergone. If the ratio is 1:1 or half the mass has converted, the material has gone through one half-life. If I:3 or ¼ of the mass is radioactive isotope, the material has undergone two half-lives.

Uranium-235 is used to date old rocks.

Carbon-14 is used to date more recent, once-living material.



The half-life of the element shown above is 14 days. After 14 days, ½ the radioactive element remains, after 28 days, ¼ of the radioactive element remains, and after 42 days, 1/8 of the radioactive element remains.