

6. How were the mountains formed?

Have you ever looked at a mountain and wondered how it formed? Before we can discuss how it formed, it is important that we first understand that there are 5 types of mountains and each type was formed in a different way and offers unique physical characteristics.

One thing that all mountains have in common is that each took millions of years to form. Fold Mountains are the most common type of mountain and were formed by the Earth's tectonic plates crashing together. Because of the tremendous energies involved, the sides of the plates crumpled like cars in a head-on collision. Many of the world's mountain ranges were created in this manner. The Rocky Mountains are a great example of Fold Mountains.

Dome Mountains: are formed when magma from beneath the Earth's surface is pushed up, but doesn't actually crack through. This bulge of magma eventually cools and hardens into hard rock. The layers of softer rock above the magma erode away and you're left with a large dome-shaped mountain. The Black Hills of South Dakota are a great example of domed mountains.

Fault Block Mountains are mountains formed along fault lines. Blocks of Earth are uplifted and tilted over as two plates grind together. The uplifted part forms a mountain, and the lowered parts are filled in with eroded material.

Volcanic Mountains are formed when magma cracks through the surface to form a volcano. Regular eruptions of lava, ash and rock build up creating a mountain. Some of the largest mountains in the world are volcanoes.

Plateau Mountains were formed by erosion. If you have a high plateau, rivers will carve deep channels into the area. Eventually, you have mountains in between the river valleys. We love to spend time hiking and exploring mountains. It is fascinating to learn that each mountain is unique. Imagining the changes this land went through over millions of years, to form in to what it is today, gives us a greater appreciation of mountains!

Sources:

<http://www.universetoday.com/29833/how-mountains-are-formed/>