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[Almanahj Website](#) → [American curriculum](#) → [11th Grade](#) → [Geology](#) → [Term 1](#) → [The file](#)

More files for 11th Grade , Subject Geology , Term 1

Worksheet about The characteristics of the Earth that are necessary to support life	1
Worksheet about Earth	2
Worksheet about Earths Spheres	3
Worksheet about The Movement of the Earth and the Moon	4
Worksheet about Earths Interior	5
Worksheet about Earths Subsystem	6
Worksheet about Subsystem of Earth	7

OUR SHIFTING EARTH

Reading Comprehension

- 1 What is the passage mainly about?
 - a. the most famous debate in the field of geology
 - b. how geologists arrived at the ideas behind the plate tectonics theory
 - c. Alfred Wegener's contributions to the theory of plate tectonics
 - d. what fossil evidence can tell us about the history of Earth

- 2 Which idea do the theories of continental drift and plate tectonics have in common?
 - a. Mid-ocean ridges are responsible for creating new earth.
 - b. Both continents and oceans rest atop moving plates.
 - c. Pangaea was the first manifestation of a supercontinent.
 - d. The positions of Earth's landmasses are not fixed.

- 3 What happens when two continental plates collide?
 - a. They break apart and move away from each other.
 - b. The fossils within them are dispersed.
 - c. Land is pushed up to create mountains.
 - d. New land is formed from cooling magma.

- 4 The word **plausible** in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - a. possible
 - b. identical
 - c. beneficial
 - d. simple

- 5 Which of the following was NOT part of Wegener's evidence in support of continental drift?
 - a. underwater maps created by marine sonar technology
 - b. geological correlations among disparate rock samples
 - c. similarities in the shapes of coastlines
 - d. remains of tropical life in Antarctica

- 6 What can be inferred about Antarctica?
 - a. There is a mid-ocean ridge near it.
 - b. It is the last remaining fragment of Pangaea.
 - c. It was once positioned close to the equator.
 - d. South America used to be attached directly to it.

Summary

Step 1 Read the passage again and complete the outline with the words below.

similarities / fossil / evidence / Pangaea / moving / Wegener's
plate tectonics / hypothesized / moving / continental drift / ridges

I. Earth's continents are constantly _____

A. First suggested by thinkers who noted _____ among coastlines

II. Alfred Wegener's work

A. _____ about a past supercontinent called _____

B. Collected rock and _____ evidence to support his idea

C. Introduced a theory of _____

D. His theory was rejected for lack of _____

III. The theory of _____

A. New sonar maps enabled the discovery of mid-ocean _____

B. Earth's surface is made up of multiple _____ plates

C. Finally proved _____ theory correct

Step 2 Complete the summary with your own words based on the outline.

Throughout Earth's history, the continents have been constantly _____.

_____ The theory
of plate tectonics finally proved Wegener's theory of _____ correct.