

What are mountains?



LESSON | What are mountains?

23

Everybody knows what a mountain is. It is a section of land that is much higher than the land around it. To be classified as a mountain, the top of a hill or mound of land must be at least 600 meters higher than the surrounding land.

Mountains can be beautiful to see. Some mountains are very high, with snow-capped peaks. Such mountains are usually rocky and have sharp, jagged edges. Other mountains are lower. They are more rounded and are covered with trees.

Mountains can be described in three stages: young, mature, and old. A young mountain has a steep slope. Its peaks are sharp and jagged. The valleys in young mountains are narrow.

As a mountain becomes mature, its peaks are worn down by weathering. The peaks become more rounded. The slopes become less steep.

As a mountain becomes old, its peaks become almost flat. There are no jagged peaks. An old mountain looks like rolling hills. The valleys in old mountains are wide.

MOUNTAIN SYSTEMS

Most mountains do not stand alone. They are part of a group of mountains. A group of mountains with the same shape, structure, and age is called a mountain range. Groups of mountain ranges form mountain systems. Mountain systems make up mountain belts. There are only two main mountain belts.



Figure A Mount St. Helens in Washington state is part of the Cascade mountain range.

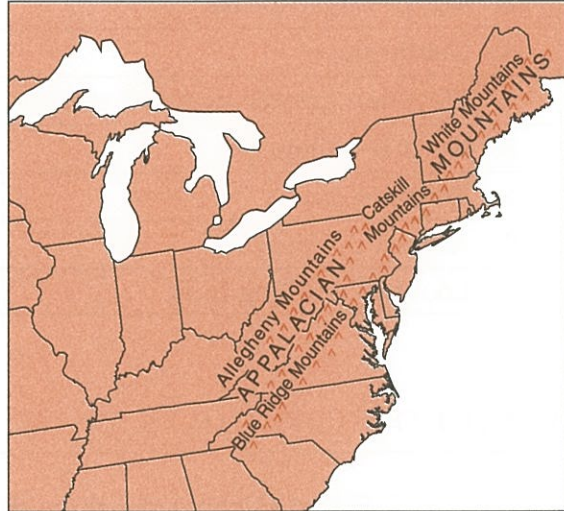


Figure B The Appalachian mountain system is in the eastern United States. The Blue Ridge and Great Smokey mountain ranges are part of the Appalachian System.

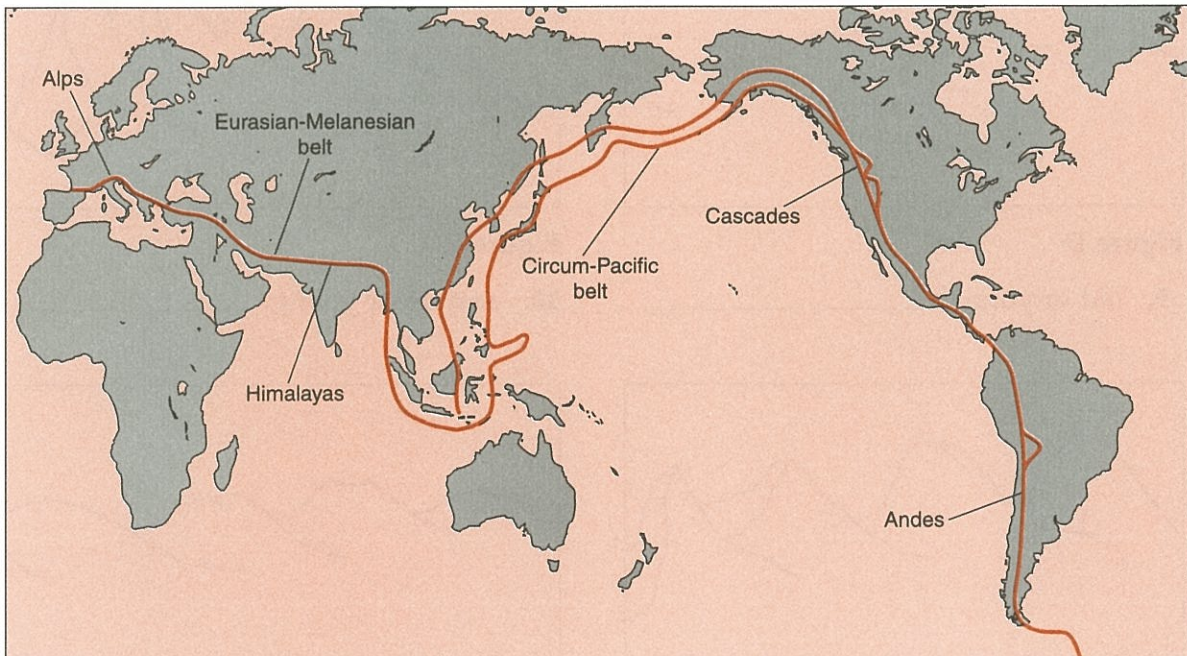


Figure C The two major mountain belts are the Eurasian-Melanesian [yoo-RAY-zhen mel-uh-NEE-zhun] and the Circum-Pacific belt.

COMPLETE THE CHART

Answer the questions by putting a "YES" or "NO" in the space provided.

Characteristic	Young	Mature	Old
1. Wide valley			
2. Sharp, jagged peaks			
3. Gentle slope			
4. Elevation greater than 600 meters			
5. Narrow valleys			
6. Rounded peaks			
7. Almost flat peaks			
8. Looks like rolling hills			

WHAT DO THE PICTURES SHOW?

Figures D, E, F, and G show the three stages of the same mountain area. Identify each stage—young, mature, or old. Write in the stages on the proper lines.

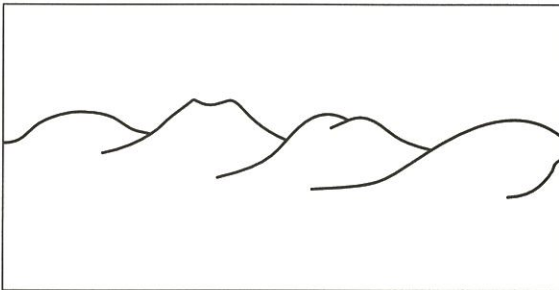


Figure D

9. old or young? _____

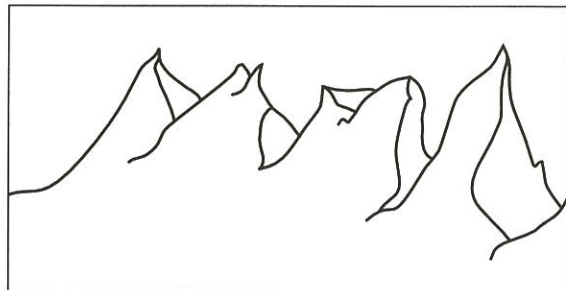


Figure E

10. mature or young? _____

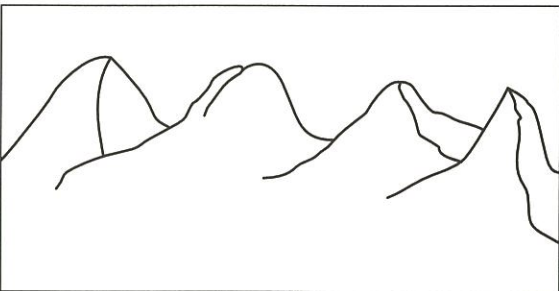


Figure F

11. mature or old? _____

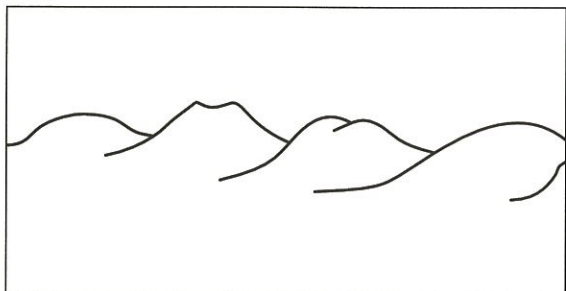


Figure G

12. mature or old? _____

MORE ABOUT MOUNTAINS

Use the map to answer the following questions.

1. Name the mountain ranges that make up the Appalachian mountain system.

2. Name the four states that the Allegheny mountains are found in.

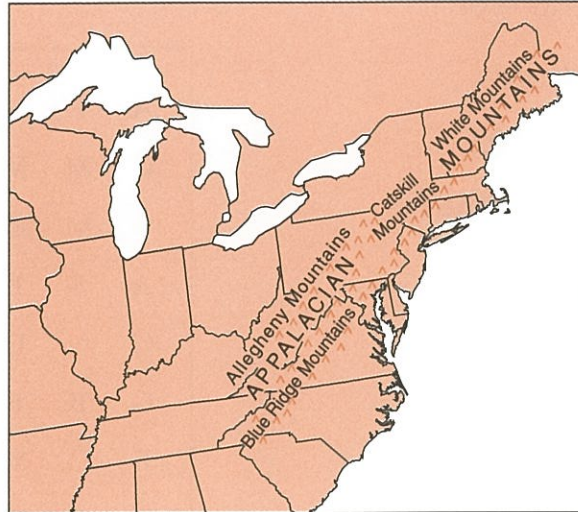


Figure G

TRUE OR FALSE

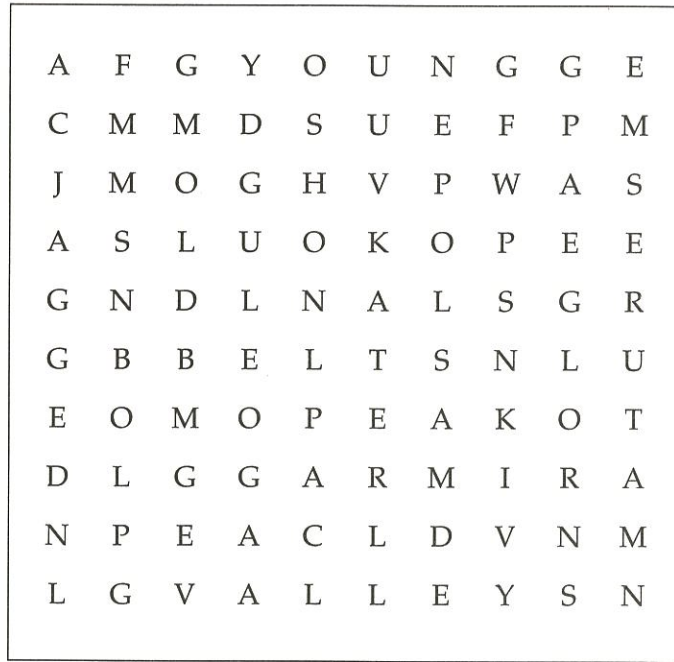
In the space provided, write "true" if the sentence is true. Write "false" if the sentence is false.

- _____ 1. Mountains can be described in three stages.
- _____ 2. All mountains have snow-capped peaks.
- _____ 3. Most mountains stand alone.
- _____ 4. There are three main mountain belts.
- _____ 5. The valleys in old mountains are narrow.
- _____ 6. Groups of mountain ranges form mountain systems.
- _____ 7. The peaks of a mountain are worn down by weathering.
- _____ 8. Old mountains look like rolling hills.
- _____ 9. All mountains are at least 600 meters high.
- _____ 10. A young mountain has flat peaks.

WORD SEARCH

The list on the left contains words that you have used in this Lesson. Find and circle each word where it appears in the box. The spellings may go in any direction: up, down, left, right, or diagonally.

YOUNG
 JAGGED
 MOUNTAIN
 RANGE
 PEAK
 BELTS
 OLD
 MATURE
 SLOPE
 VALLEYS



REACHING OUT

Researching: Find out the missing information to complete the chart below.

Three Famous Mountains

Name	Height (meters)	Country	Mountain Range
Mount McKinley		United States	
Mount Whitney	4,418		Sierra Nevada
Mount Everest			

- Which of the mountains is the highest? _____
- Which mountain(s) are found in the United States? _____
