

Rocks Around the World

Name _____

Background: Rocks are all around us. However, some rocks are much more fascinating than others because of how they look, the way they have been formed, and the activities for which they are used. In this activity, you will read about some famous rocks and answer the questions that follow.

Rock of Gibraltar:

The Rock of Gibraltar is a famous limestone rock in the Mediterranean Sea. It is connected to Spain by a one-mile isthmus, but is part of the United Kingdom. It is 3 miles (4.83 km) long, 3/4 of a mile (1.21 km) wide, and stands 1,396 feet (426 m) at its highest point. It is covered by a nature reserve that is home to 270 species of wild birds and Barbary Apes, which are the only wild monkeys in Europe. Because it is positioned where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea, it is a valuable port that has been fought over for hundreds of years. The inside of the rock is filled with a series of tunnels known as the Great Siege Tunnels. Construction began on the tunnels in the late 1700s when France and Spain were trying to capture the rock. The tunnels were rebuilt following the war and were later expanded. During World War II, over 30,000 British soldiers lived on the rock to protect it from Germany, but it was never invaded.

Roche Percé:

Roche Percé, also referred to as Percé Rock, is one of the largest natural arches in the world. Located at the tip of Gaspé peninsula in Quebec, Canada where the Appalachian Mountains meet the Gulf of St. Lawrence, this limestone rock rises 288.71 feet (88 m) at its highest point and is 1,453,41 feet (443 m) long. Its name means pierced rock because of the two holes that it contains. It once had two arches, but the second has been destroyed as a result of continuous erosion by the ocean. It is possible to walk through the arch at low tide to see the thousands of fossils that are embedded in the rock.

Garden of the Gods:

The Garden of the Gods is a 1392-acre public park located in Colorado City, Colorado. The park contains sandstone hogback formations. The hogback formations are layers of sandstone that have been tilted to create ridges. Some have been tilted so much that they are vertical. The tallest ridge, called Kissing Camels, is 320 feet (97.54 m) high. The land was given to the Colorado City in 1909 by the children of Charles Elliot Perkins, the head of a railroad company, who wanted the land to be open to the public. It got its name when a young man, seeing it for the first time, proclaimed that it is "a place fit for the gods to assemble." It is a large rock climbing destination and is also used by the public for walking, hiking, biking, and horseback riding.

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Giant's Causeway:

Giant's Causeway consists of 40,000 basalt columns connected together to form stepping stones to the ocean. It is located near the town of Bushmills in Northern Ireland. The Causeway was formed 62 to 65 million years ago over a long period of volcanic activity. The basalt columns look very unusual, but are actually a common feature produced by volcanic activity as a result of rapid cooling. The columns form when lava comes in contact with water, causing the lava to cool rapidly and then contract and fracture. Most columns are hexagonal, meaning they have six sides, although some have 4, 5, 7, or 8 sides. Giant's Causeway has many notable rock formations named after the objects they resemble, such as Camel's Hump, Chimney Stacks, the Harp, and the Organ.

Questions:

1. Which of the four rock features mentioned are sedimentary rocks?
2. Which of the four rock features discussed are igneous rocks?
3. How old is the Giant's Causeway?
4. What does Roche Percé mean?
5. What structures were built in the Rock of Gibraltar? Why were they built?
6. Describe the hogback formations found in the Garden of Gods.
7. Describe the coolest rock you have seen. Do you know what type of rock it was? Is it a famous rock?