

Erosion and Deposition

Weathering is the process that breaks down rock into smaller pieces. There are several different ways in which this can occur. Once the weathering process has occurred, other processes take over.

Erosion is the process of carrying away weathered material. The agents of erosion include moving water, ice, waves, and wind. *Deposition* is the process of laying the weathered material down in a new location. ^{gravity}

Most of the time, erosion is a gradual process. It may take millions of years for the agents of erosion to make noticeable differences in the Earth's surface. The Grand Canyon in Arizona is the result of close to three million years of erosion.

Erosion, however, can also act very rapidly. An unusually rainy period can cause rivers to overflow their banks and flood the areas surrounding them. The erosion caused by the rapid rivers and their flooding action can have very quick, devastating results for the Earth's surface and especially for its inhabitants.

In the next few pages, we will look at moving water, ice, waves, and wind as the agents of erosion. We will see how each agent works. We will also investigate the effects of deposition by each of these agents.



For three million years, the process of erosion has been creating the Grand Canyon.