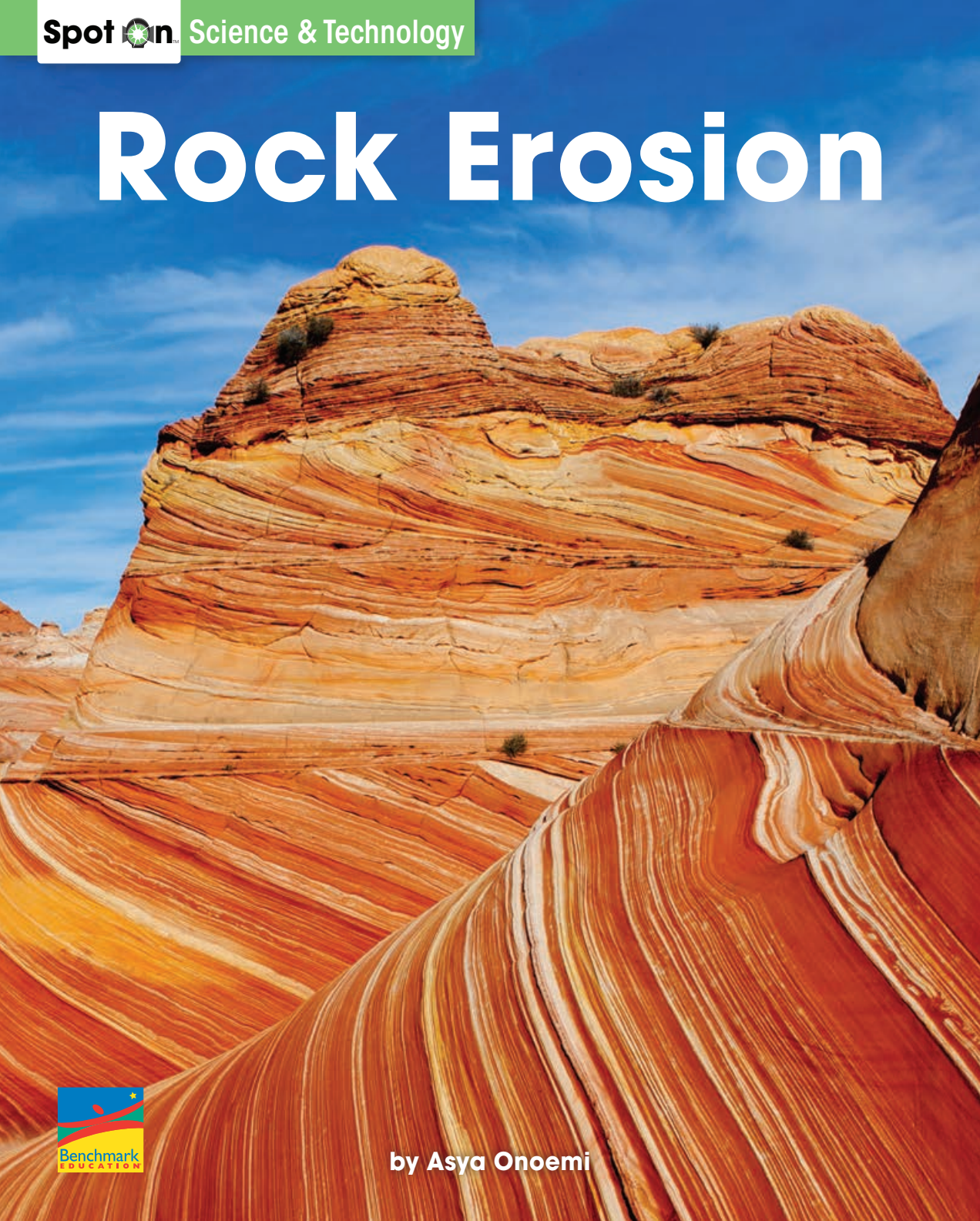
Spot On Science & Technology

Rock Erosion



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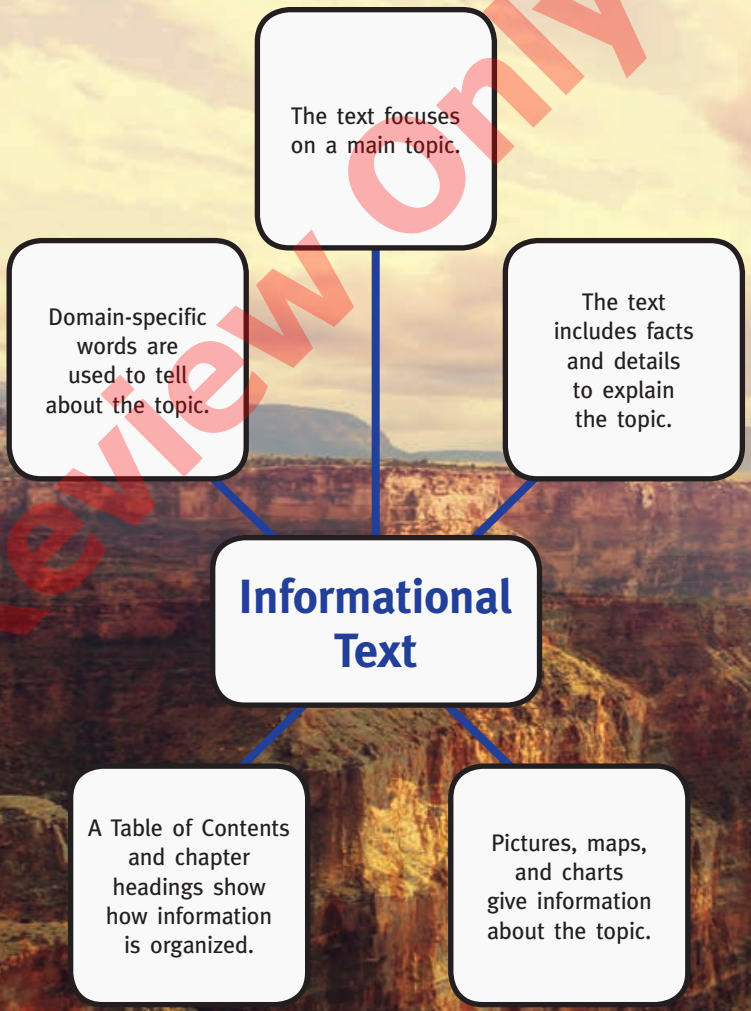

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CHAPTER 1

What Is Rock Erosion?

The term rock erosion describes rocks breaking into smaller pieces. We say that rocks **erode** when this happens. We also say that rocks erode when they **dissolve**.

▼ These rocks are eroding. They are becoming smaller rocks.

Sometimes rocks erode very slowly. At other times, they break down very quickly. How fast a rock erodes depends on the forces around it.

▲ The erosion of rocks in the desert takes thousands of years.

▲ The erosion of this rock in a forest took only a few years.

CHAPTER 2

How Do Rocks Form?

Rocks are a mixture of **minerals** and organic matter. Minerals are found on Earth. The organic matter comes from plants and animals that lived long ago.

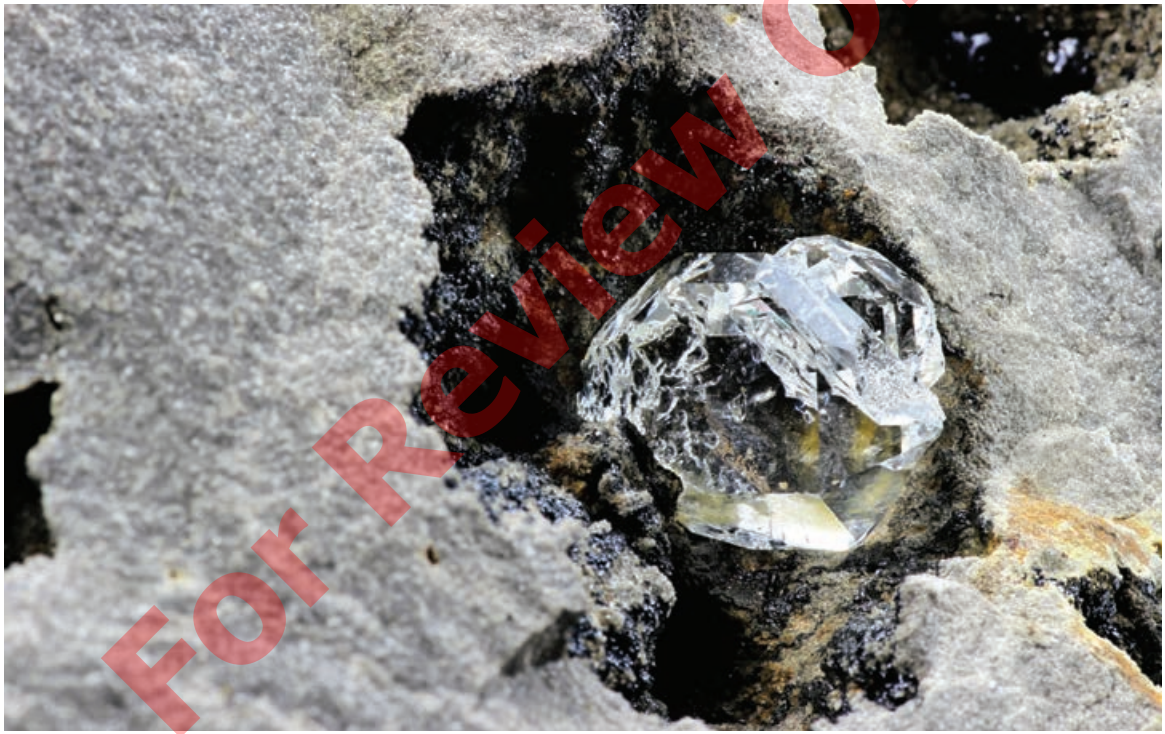
Rocks can form in three different ways. First, volcanoes spew hot matter called lava when they erupt. When the lava cools, it turns to rock.

▲ This is hot lava from a volcano. When it cools, it turns to rock.

Second, rock can form when pieces of older rocks, minerals, and organic matter settle together in layers. As the layers build up, their weight and gravity presses them together. After many, many years, they become rock.

▲ This rock formed around a sea shell.

The third way rocks can form takes place when existing rock comes in contact with high temperature or with high pressure. These forces can cause the rock to change color or shape.



▲ This is a diamond under Earth's surface.

CHAPTER 3

How Does Water Make Rocks Erode?

When it rains, rainwater pounds on rocks. It's like a hammer. Over time, the water causes **openings** and cracks in the rocks. The openings are like small holes.

▼ Holes caused by the rain are visible in this rock.

The **constant** flow of water over rocks in a stream or river acts like sandpaper. Over time, the **force** of the water wears down the soft rocks and carries them away.

▼ River water can wear down rocks.