

Mountains – Physical Features

Mountains are enormous landforms that rise steeply above the surrounding land. The very top of a mountain is called the **summit**, and the low ground between mountains is called a **valley**.

Mountains are formed over millions of years. Most are created when huge pieces of the Earth's crust slowly push together, forcing rock upwards. The Rocky Mountains in North America and the Alps in Europe were formed this way.

The higher you climb a mountain, the colder it gets. Snow and ice can remain on high summits all year round. The air also becomes thinner, making it difficult to breathe.

Mountains receive a lot of rainfall and snowfall. This water collects and flows downhill, forming streams and rivers. Many of the world's great rivers begin in mountains.

Plants and animals that live on mountains must be tough. Conifer trees grow on lower slopes because they can survive cold and wind. Higher up, only mosses and small plants grow. Animals like snow leopards, ibex, and condors have all adapted to mountain conditions.

The world's tallest mountain, Mount Everest, stands at 8,849 metres above sea level.

Questions

1. What is the name for the very top of a mountain?
2. What is the low ground between mountains called?
3. How are most mountains formed?
4. Name two mountain ranges mentioned in the article.
5. What happens to temperature as you climb higher up a mountain?
6. Why is it difficult to breathe high up on a mountain?
7. What happens to the water from rain and snow on mountains?
8. What type of trees grow on the lower slopes of mountains?
9. How tall is Mount Everest?
10. Why do you think the animals that live on mountains need to be specially adapted?



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