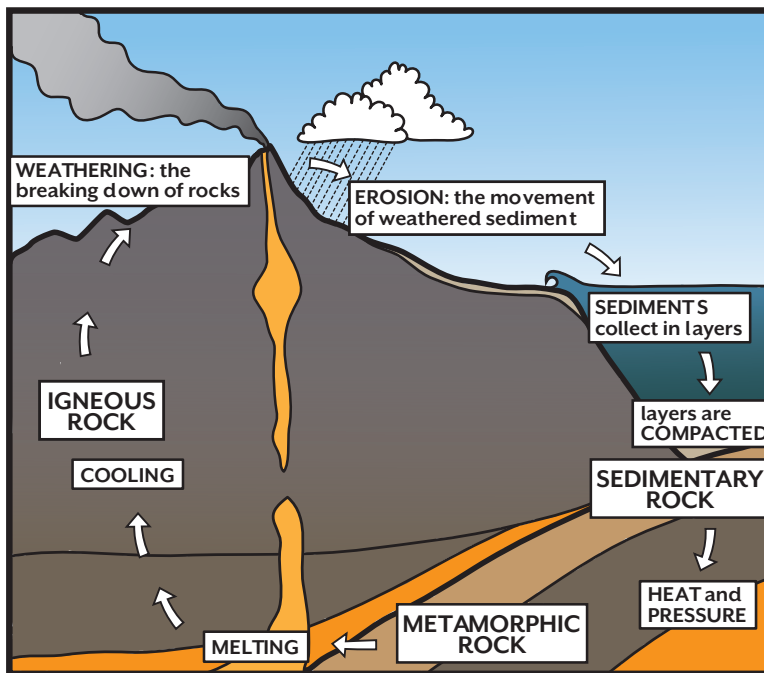


# What is the rock cycle?



The **rock cycle** is a gradual process of movement and change that constantly reshapes our landscape. Processes on and within Earth—including weather, pressure and temperature—cause rocks to break down, melt and solidify over and over. Rocks change from one form to another, but are never destroyed.



## *The Three Types of Rock:*

**Sedimentary rocks** are made from layers of sediment.

**Metamorphic rocks** are formed under extreme heat and pressure.

**Igneous rocks** are melted rock that has cooled and hardened.

Processes within the earth push rocks up to the surface, where they're broken down and moved through **weathering** and **erosion**. Bits of rock and sand called **sediment** are deposited in layers. Pressure squeezes the layers and they solidify to form **sedimentary rock**. These rocks gradually move deeper underground, where they encounter extreme heat and pressure that transforms them into **metamorphic rock**. Rocks that are pushed even deeper toward the intense heat of Earth's mantle will melt and become magma. Magma that reaches Earth's surface cools and hardens to form **igneous rock**. This constant recycling of rock has occurred for millions of years, which means that some rocks have been around since the time of the dinosaurs!

