

Misty Mountain Sierra

Mountains

A mountain is a large, rocky raised part of the Earth's surface that is much higher than a hill. A mountain's highest point is called its peak, or summit. Mountains are 610m in height or taller. They are usually found in groups called ranges.



San Juan Mountains, Colorado

Mountains around the world

Name	Range	Continent	Height
Mount Everest	Himalayas	Asia	8848m
K2	Karakoram	Asia	8611m
Aconcagua	Andes	South America	6962m
Mount Kilimanjaro	Eastern Rift	Africa	5895m
Mount Kenya	Eastern Rift	Africa	5199m
Mount Ararat	Armenian Highlands	Europe	5137m
Mount Olympus	Olympus	Europe	2917m
Mount Kosciuszko	Snowy Mountains	Australia	2228m
Ben Nevis	Grampian Mountains	Europe	1345m

Key Questions

What is a mountain?

How are mountains formed?

What are the names of mountains and mountain ranges around the world and in the U.K.?

How can I tell how high a mountain is from a map?

Can plants survive at the top of a mountain?

What human activities are there in a mountain area?

Mountain formation

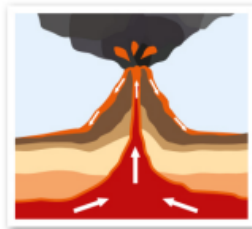
Mountains form over millions of years. They are made when the Earth's tectonic plates push together or move apart. Mountains are also formed when magma underneath the Earth's crust pushes large areas of land upwards. There are six types of mountain.



fold mountain



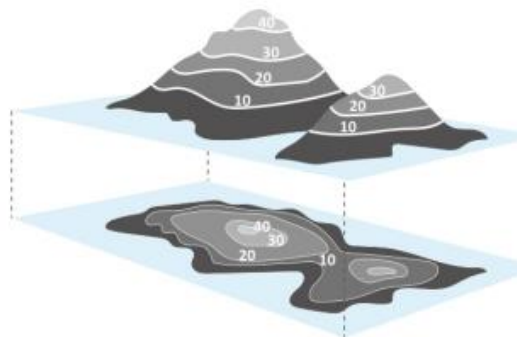
fault-block mountain



volcanic mountain

Contour lines

Contour lines are drawn on a map to show the shape of the land. Contour lines join together points at the same height above sea level. The height is shown in metres, at 5 or 10m intervals. If contour lines are close together it means the ground is steep. If they are far apart, the ground is flat.



Climate

At the bottom of a mountain, in the lowland area, the temperature can be mild. Many different plants and trees grow, providing food for a variety of animals. Higher up the mountain, in the upland area, it can be very cold and windy. There are fewer plants and animals and those that live there are adapted to survive in the harsh conditions. Mountain weather can change very quickly, from clear skies to intense thunderstorms and blizzards.

Plants

Some plant species have adapted to live at high altitudes, including grasses, mosses and flowering plants. They have adapted to grow in cold temperatures, dry air and have a short growing season. Trees cannot grow at high altitudes because of the cold temperatures and lack of moisture.



alpine fleabane

Glossary

adaptation	A change in an organism that allows it to better suit its environment.
altitude	The height of an object or point above sea level.
climate	The usual weather patterns of a place.
crust	The rocky outer layer of the Earth.
lowland area	An area of land that is usually flat and is not very high above sea level.
magma	Hot molten rock found in the Earth's mantle.
tectonic plate	A large, moving piece of rock that makes up the Earth's crust.
upland area	Land that is high above sea level.