



Plate Tectonics: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Peter Molnar

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The 1960s revealed a new and revolutionary idea in geological thought: that the continents drift with respect to one another. After having been dismissed for decades as absurd, the concept gradually became part of geology's basic principles. We now know that the Earth's crust and upper mantle consist of a small number of rigid plates that move, and there are significant boundaries between pairs of plates, usually known as earthquake belts.

Plate tectonics now explains much of the structure and phenomena we see today: how oceans form, widen, and disappear; why earthquakes and volcanoes are found in distinct zones which follow plate boundaries; how the great mountain ranges of the world were built. The impact of plate tectonics is studied closely as these processes continue: the Himalaya continues to grow, the Atlantic is widening, and new oceans are forming. In this *Very Short Introduction* Peter Molnar provides a succinct and authoritative account of the nature and mechanisms of plate tectonics and its impact on our understanding of Earth.

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