

Chapter 11 – Weathering and Erosion Vocabulary

1. weathering – natural mechanical or chemical process that causes rocks to change by breaking them down and causing them to crumble
2. mechanical weathering – process that breaks rocks down into smaller pieces without changing them chemically
3. chemical weathering – process in which the chemical composition of rocks is changed by agents such as natural acids and oxygen
4. soil – mixture of weathered rock, organic matter, water, and air that evolves over time and supports the growth of plant life
5. topography – configuration of surface features, including position and slope; also influences the types of soils that develop
6. erosion – wearing away and removal of rock material that occurs by agents such as gravity, ice, wind, and water
7. mass movement – occurs when gravity alone causes rock or sediment to move down a slope
8. creep – a process in which sediments move slowly downhill
9. slump – occurs when a mass of rock or sediment moves downhill along a curved surface
10. deflation – erosion of land that occurs when wind blows across loose sediments and carries them away, often leaving behind particles too heavy to move
11. abrasion – a form of erosion that occurs when wind blows sediments into rocks, makes pits in the rocks, and produces smooth, polished surfaces
12. runoff – water that flows over Earth's surface