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OUR CHANGING PLANET

THE EARTH: A CHANGING PLANET



1 Scientists believe the Earth is 4.6 billion years old. However, the **mountains**, valleys, **hills**, **rivers**, **deserts** and **forests** we see today are much younger than that. For example, Mount Everest is about 60 million years old and the Amazon rainforest is only 10 million years old. The youngest **sea** in the world is the Baltic Sea, at about 15,000 years old.

2 The Earth is always changing because of **volcanoes**, earthquakes and, of course, wind and rain. Some of these changes are very slow and others are quick. Water and ice can make very big changes to the planet. For example, glaciers (rivers of ice) can cut through mountains and make **lakes** and deep **valleys**. Eighty or more volcanoes are under the oceans and sometimes they become new islands. This is happening in the South Pacific, near Tonga.

3 It's normal for our planet to change, but at the moment, scientists think it's changing faster than usual. They don't understand everything that's happening, but they know that some **deserts** (places where it doesn't rain much) are growing, and many forests are getting smaller. The weather is getting wetter in some places and drier in others, and there are more big storms.

4 However, these changes are not bad for everyone. Because the Arctic is getting warmer, some people in Greenland now own businesses and sell vegetables they grow on their land. That wasn't possible so far north 50 years ago. Farmers in Greenland like the warm weather and hope it will continue.

? ABOUT YOU

What is the weather like in your country?
Is the weather the same every year?

VOCABULARY AND READING

Geographical features

1 In pairs, discuss the questions. Then read the article and check your ideas.

- 1 How old is the Earth?
- 2 What's happening to the Earth's weather at the moment?

2 Read the article again and choose the best heading for each paragraph.

- A Good news in one part of the world
- B Problems for the planet
- C The age of the planet
- D How the planet changes

3 Match the words in **blue** in the article to the photos A-I. Listen and check. Then repeat.



4 Complete each sentence with the correct word from Exercise 3.

- 1 Not many plants and animals can live in _____ because they are very dry. *deserts / hills*
- 2 Many _____ have snow on top of them all year. *mountains / valleys*
- 3 There's a _____ near my home, and I like going fishing there. *river / sea*
- 4 There were so many trees in the _____ that it was impossible to see the sky. *forest / lake*
- 5 My friend and I cycled to the _____ for a swim. *lake / volcano*

5 Write five sentences of your own using the words from Exercise 3.



PRONUNCIATION

th: /θ/ and /ð/



6 Listen to the sounds θ and ð and repeat them. Then put the words in the box into the correct column.

north	other	south
that	there	these
thing	think	this

θ earth

ð weather



Listen and check. Then repeat.

1 In which photo(s) can you see each geographical feature? Write A, B, A and B or X if you cannot see it.

desert	_____ X _____
forest	_____
hill	_____
sea	_____
mountain	_____
volcano	_____
valley	_____
lake	_____
river	_____

2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of words in Exercise 1.

- 1 An example of a _____ is the Nile in Africa.
- 2 A _____ is a dangerous place. It is very, very hot inside it.
- 3 The low area between two _____ or mountains is called a _____.
- 4 The _____ is a large area of water. It has salt in it.
- 5 Not many plants can grow in a _____. There's a lot of sun and very little rain there.
- 6 A _____ has lots of trees, plants, animals and birds.

