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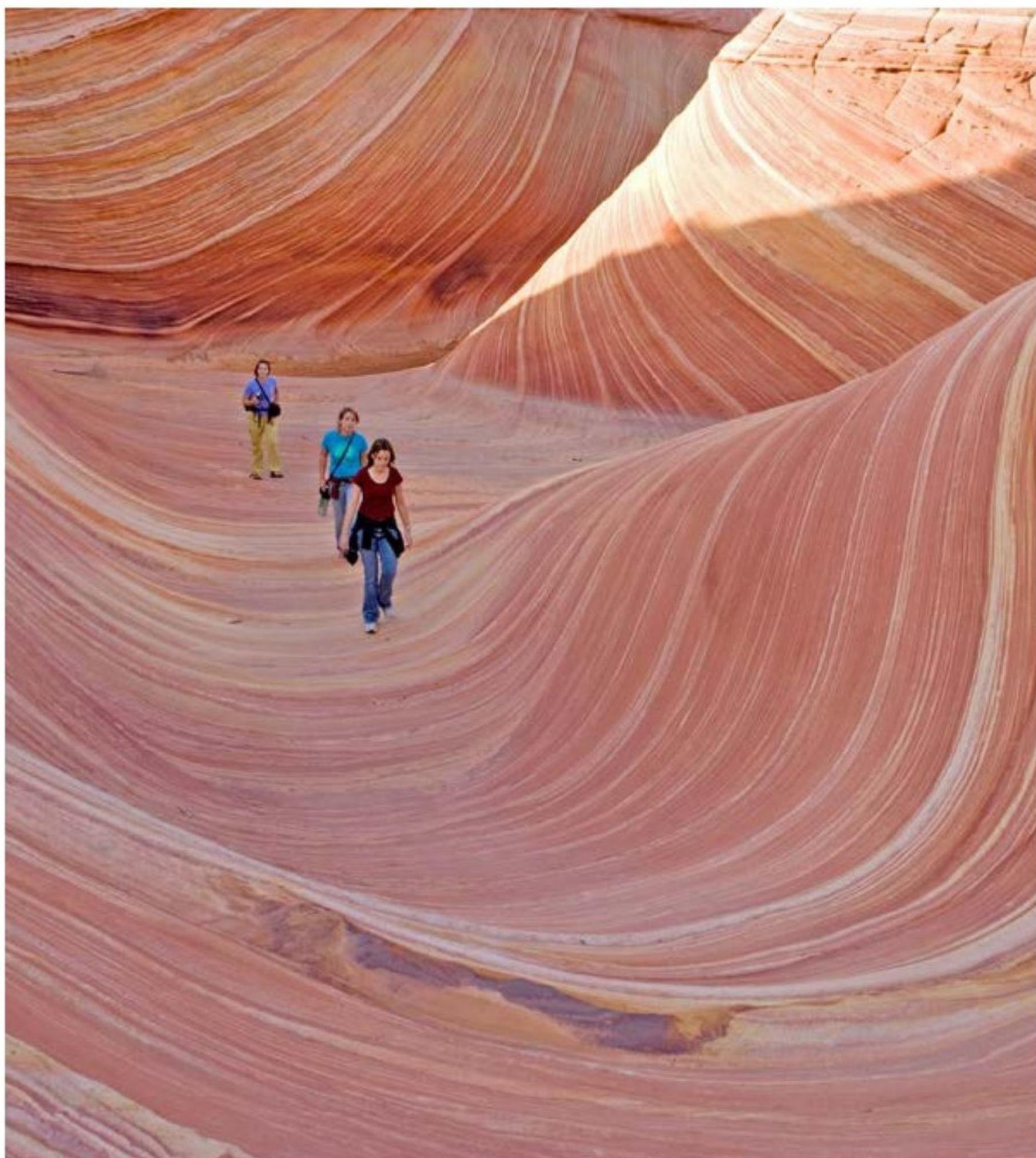
A Landforms Adventure

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Written by Rose Brooker

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A Landforms Adventure

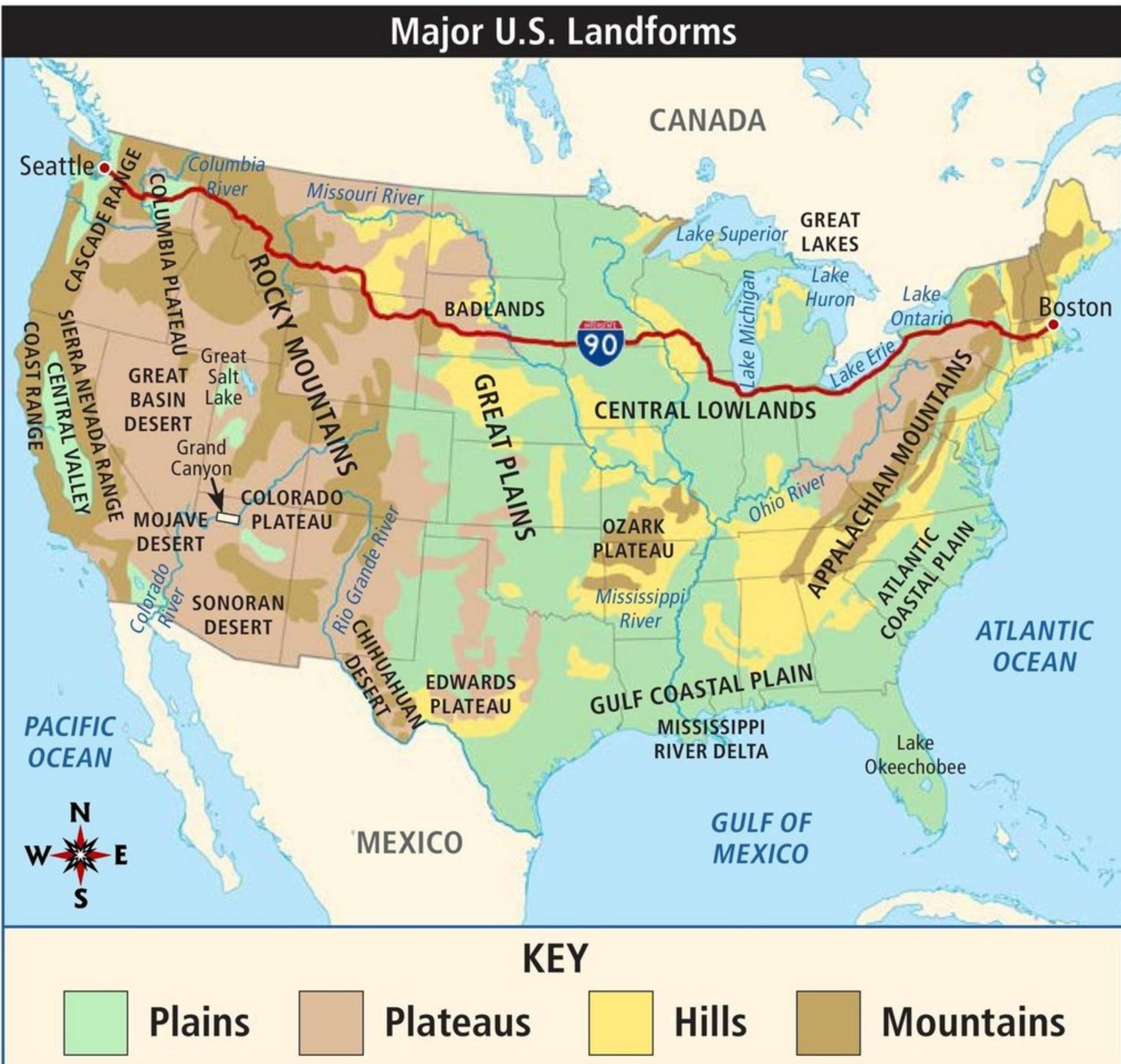


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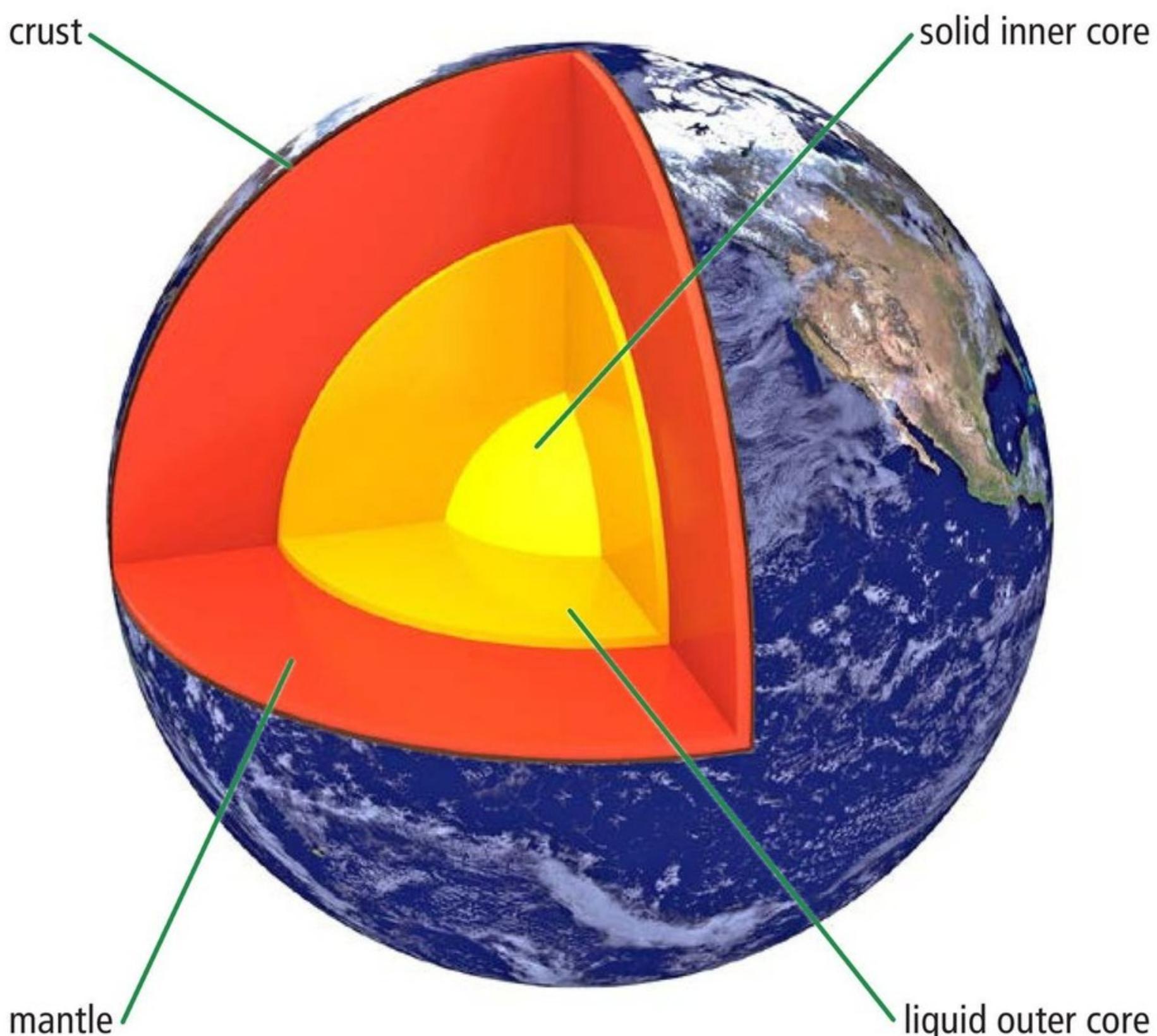
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Road Trip!

We're going on a road trip this summer! My parents and I are driving from Boston to Seattle. My class has been learning about **landforms** in school. We're going to see some amazing landforms on the trip!

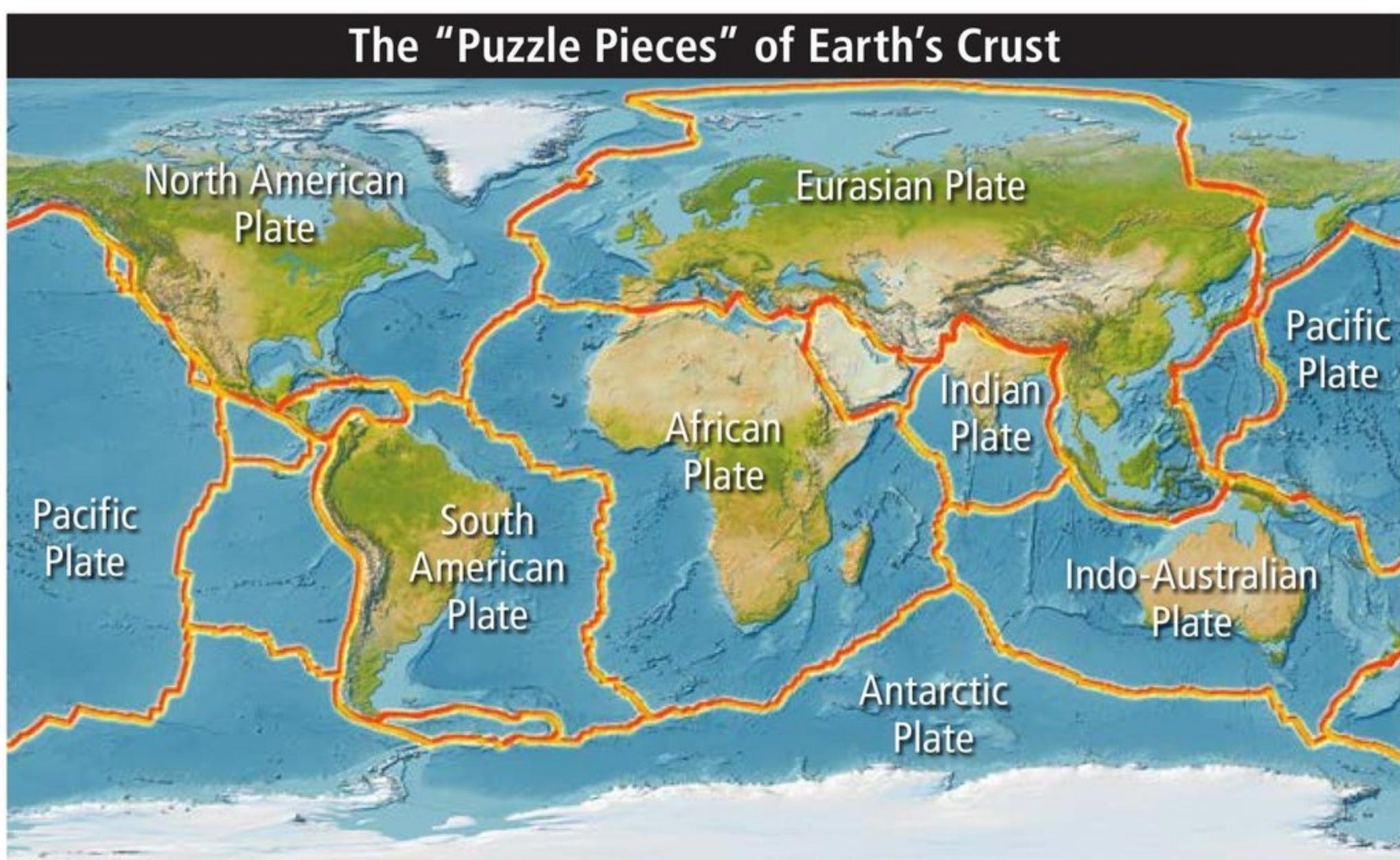


In Class

My teacher, Mr. Lopez, said that Earth's crust is made up of huge pieces of rock called *plates*. Some of the plates are larger than **continents**! The plates sit above melted rock and slowly slide around because of heat deep inside Earth. The moving plates can create landforms.

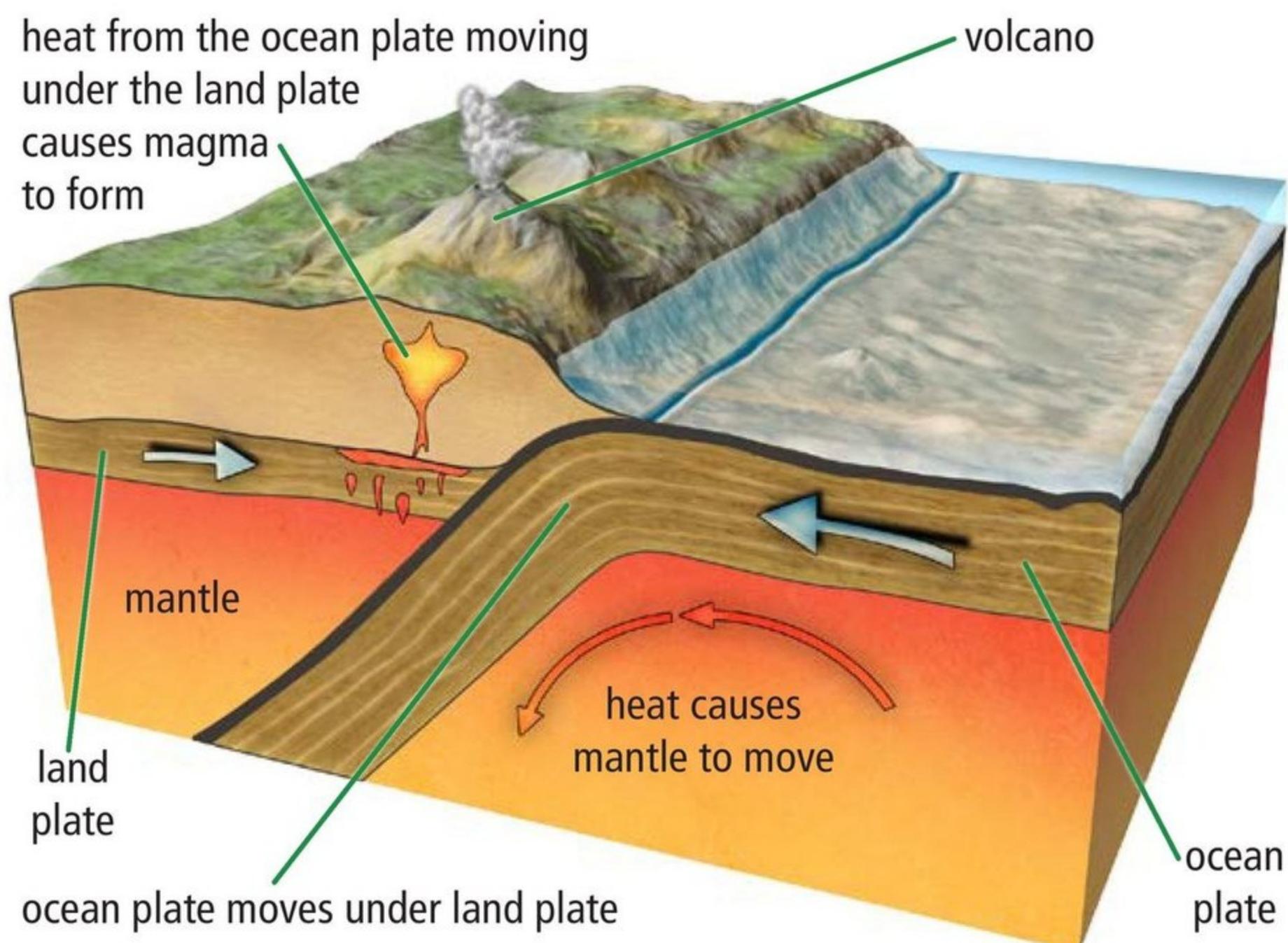
Mr. Lopez also said that Earth's surface is always changing. He said that some changes are slow, while others are fast. Old landforms can change over time, and new ones can be created.

Some landforms result from changes underground. Hot, melted rock under Earth's surface can build up and form a volcano. A volcano is a type of mountain.



Landforms can be created when the plates in Earth's crust move.

How Coastal Volcanoes Form

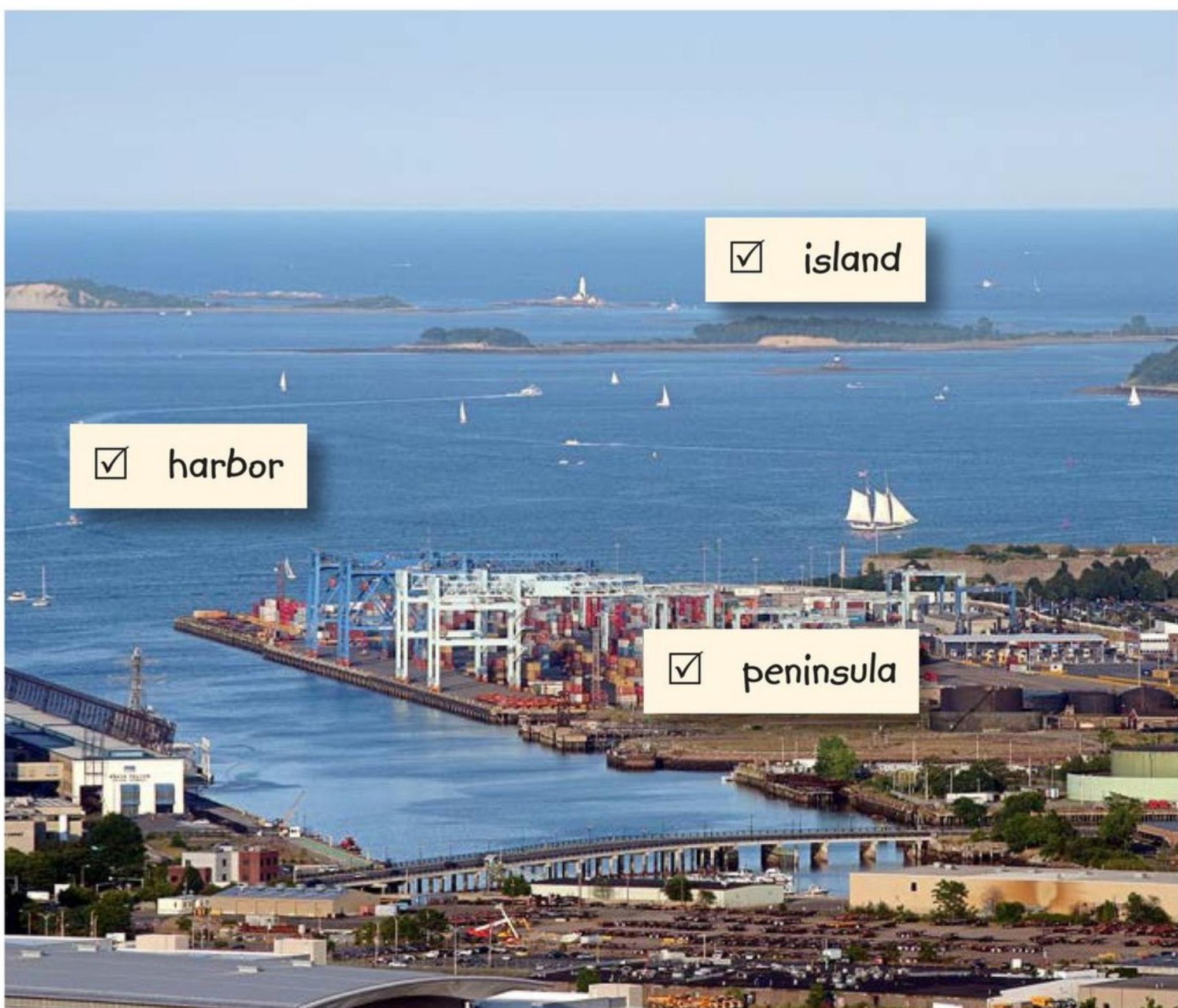


Other changes happen on the surface. **Weathering** breaks down rock and shapes it. **Erosion** carries away the pieces that have broken off. Wind, water, and ice are the main tools of weathering and erosion.

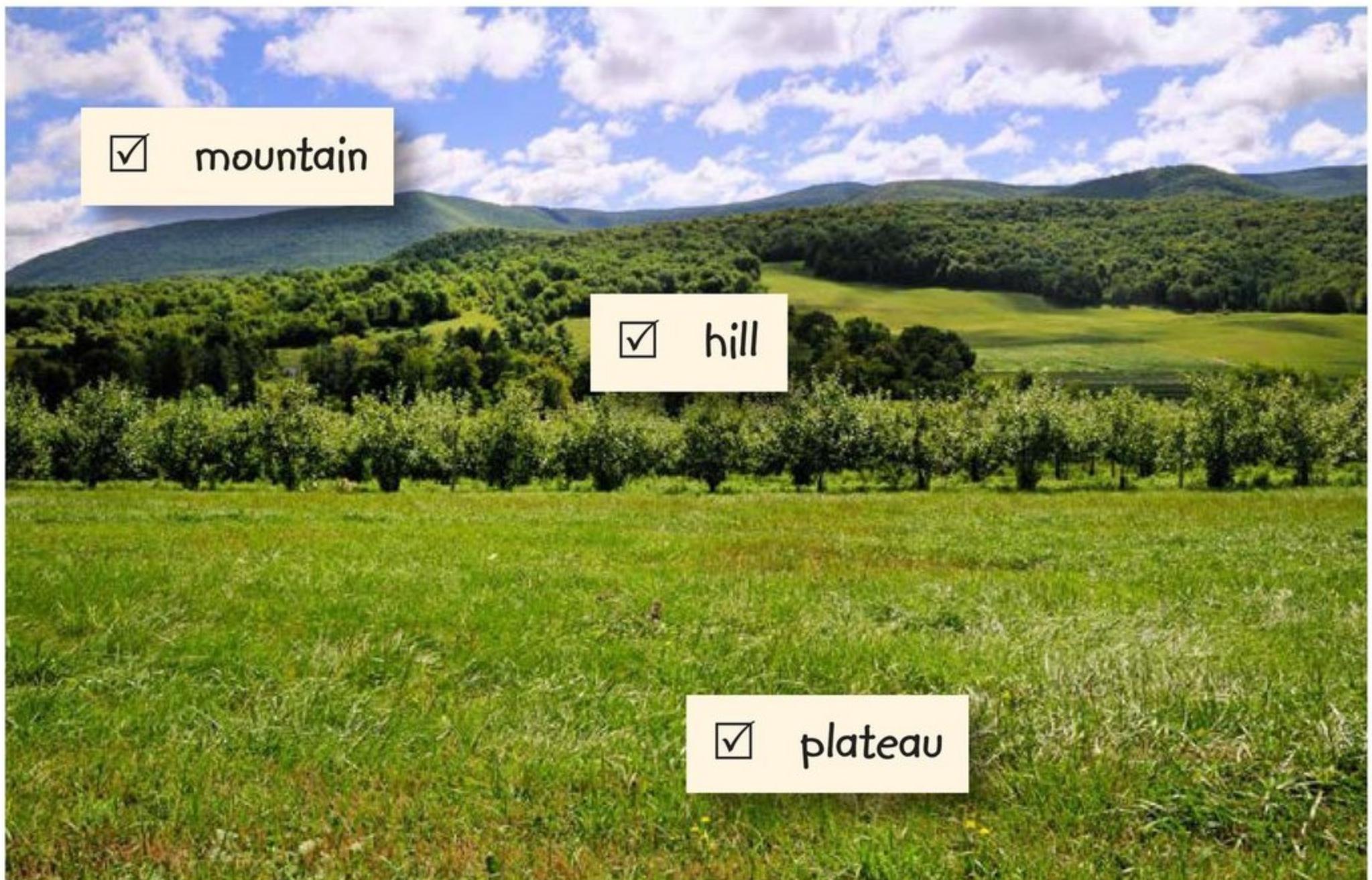
Mr. Lopez handed out a list of different landforms. I'm going to take the list on my trip and try to see them all!

Getting Ready to Leave

Mom and I start at Castle Island, in Boston Harbor. It's not really an island since it doesn't have water all around it. It's connected to the mainland on one side, so it's a **peninsula**. You can see a bunch of islands from there, though.



My mom and I saw these islands in Boston Harbor.

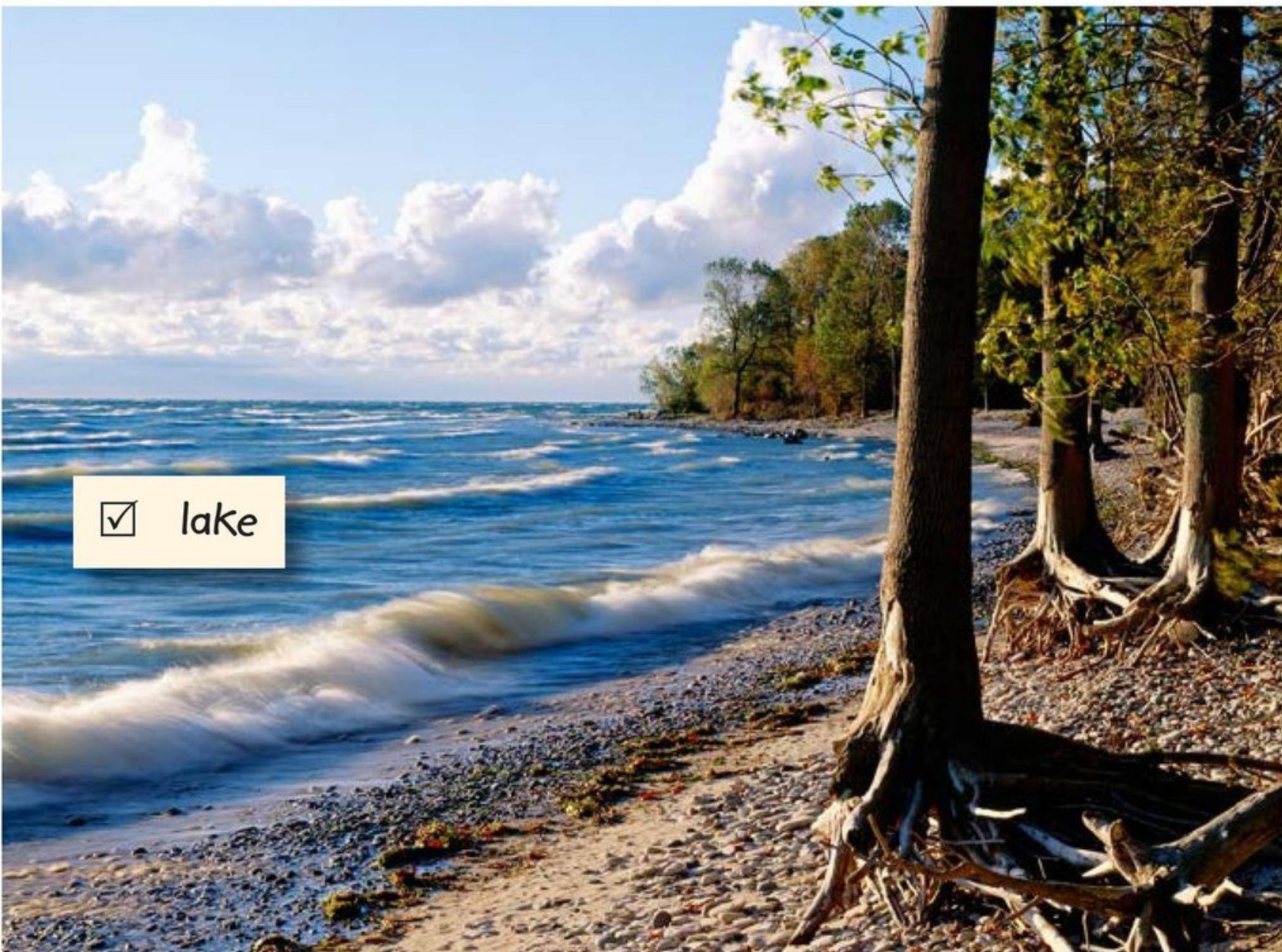


The Berkshires look more like big hills than what I think of as mountains.

On the Road

Once we start driving west, the hills and valleys grow larger, and we seem to be climbing higher. We pass some old mountains that erosion has worn down to big hills.

In New York State, the land is low and hilly in some places and higher in other places. Dad says the higher places are part of a huge, high area of land called a **plateau** (pla-TOH).



Lake Erie is much too wide to see across to the other side.

After stopping for the night, we keep driving west until we get to Lake Erie. It's one of the Great Lakes. A glacier carved the Great Lakes about fourteen thousand years ago.



isthmus

Wisconsin's state capitol building is on Madison's isthmus.

We stay overnight in Chicago and then get back on the road. Now we're driving past Madison, Wisconsin, which is on an **isthmus** (IS-muhs). It's a narrow strip of land between two bodies of water.

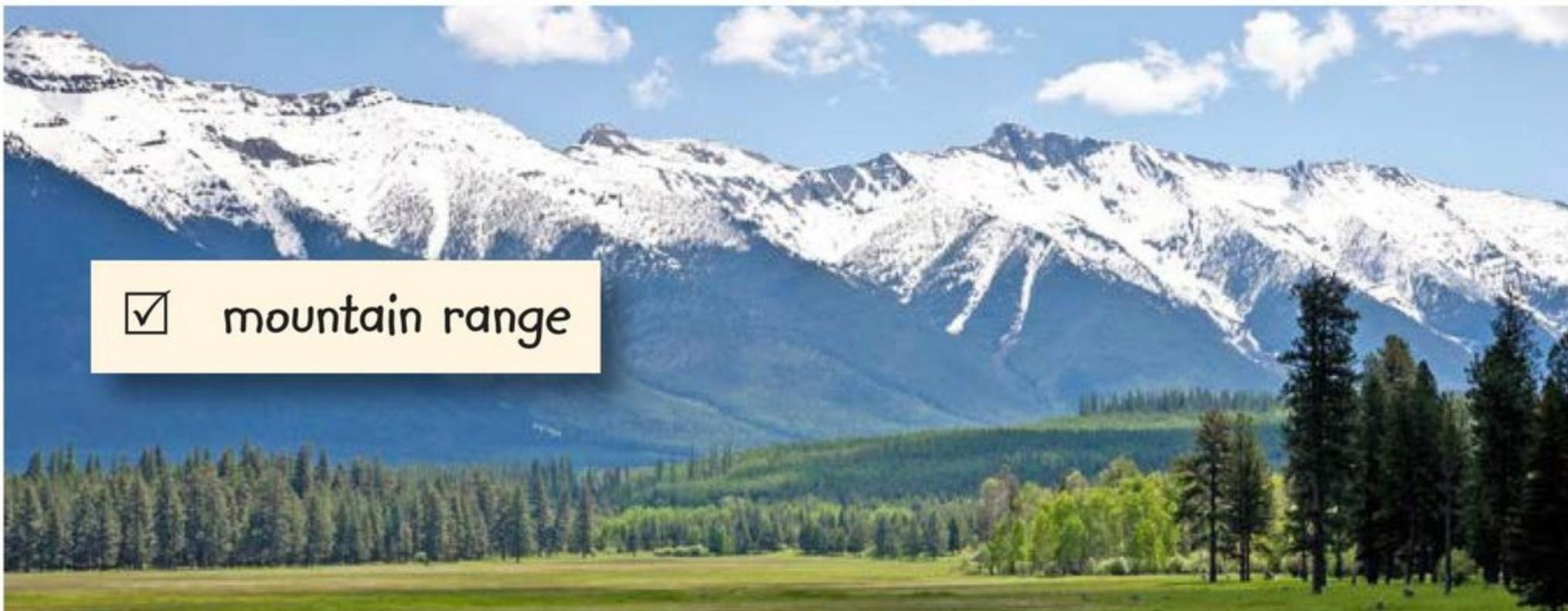
We stop to see the Wisconsin Dells. The Dells is a **gorge**—a steep, narrow valley—that was carved by the Wisconsin River. Along its sides are canyons, which are similar to gorges but not as steep or narrow.

We're almost to the Mississippi River, one of the longest rivers in the world. This part of the Mississippi was carved by glaciers.

We cross the Mississippi River on the way to the Great Plains. A plain is a large, flat area without many trees. The Great Plains formed when two plates smashed into each other and joined together. Some parts of the Great Plains are flat, and others have hills.



The grasslands of the Great Plains were once home to huge herds of bison and horses.



Snow covers the peaks of a Rocky Mountain range in Montana.

We drive through a corner of Wyoming and pass some mountains on our left. Some of the mountains have snow, but Mom says even bigger mountains are still to come.

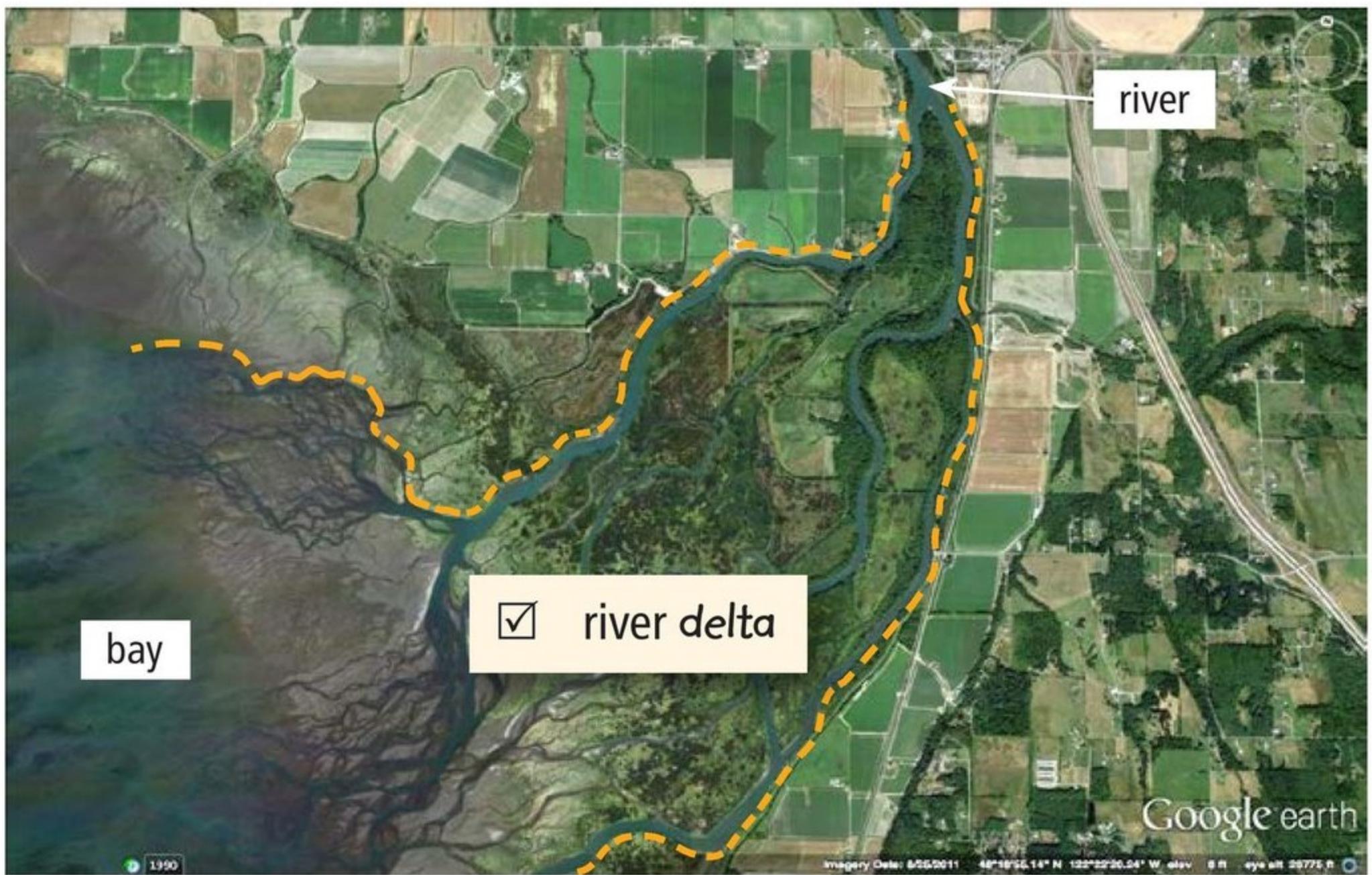
After we cross into Montana and drive for a while, Dad says, “Get ready to see something big!” Soon afterward, I see a row of high, snowy peaks—the Rocky Mountains.

The Rockies are one of the main mountain ranges in the West. They formed when two small plates beneath the Pacific Ocean slid under the North American Plate.

After driving across Montana and Idaho, we finally enter Washington. We pass Mount Rainier (ray-NEER), a huge volcano.



The top of Mount Rainier is covered with glaciers. Glaciers are large fields of ice and packed snow that stay frozen all year long.



Over time, soil built up and caused the river to split into many smaller branches in the area between the dotted lines.

One Landform to Go!

For the last landform on my list, we travel one hour north to see a **river delta**. This landform was created when dirt and rocks built up where the river flows into a bay.

I've seen some amazing landforms on this trip, and I've learned so much about how Earth's surface changes. I can't wait to tell Mr. Lopez about my summer vacation!

Glossary

continents (n.)	the main divisions of land on Earth (p. 5)
delta (n.)	a triangular area of land formed by sediment at a river's mouth (p. 15)
erosion (n.)	the natural removal of rock or soil by water, wind, or ice (p. 7)
gorge (n.)	a long, deep valley (p. 11)
isthmus (n.)	a narrow strip of land connecting two larger landmasses (p. 11)
landforms (n.)	natural formations on Earth's surface (p. 4)
peninsula (n.)	a long piece of land almost surrounded by water (p. 8)
plateau (n.)	a large raised area of flat land (p. 9)
weathering (n.)	the wearing away of Earth's surface by natural forces (p. 7)

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Front cover: Hikers rest beneath Skyline Arch in Arches National Park, Utah.

Title page: Hikers walk across the Wave, a rolling area of banded sandstone rock in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Arizona.

Page 3: (left) A sandstone formation rises above the river in the Wisconsin Dells. (top right) The Chocolate Hills in the Philippines are thousands of hills worn down by erosion. (bottom right) Wind and sand erosion bored a hole in red sandstone rock.

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