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Activities

The Rise and Fall of the Appalachians

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Appalachian Mountains once included some of the planet's tallest and sharpest peaks, but not any more. In this Planet Diary activity, you'll see how constructive and destructive forces shaped these ancient mountains over millions of years.

Directions

- See what the Appalachians look like at Great Smokey Mountains. Scroll down to *Mountain Scenes* and click *View Slideshow*. Look carefully at the shapes of the mountains in the pictures.
- Compare to the Rocky Mountains. Notice the rugged shape of the mountains as you explore the *Winter*, *Park Scenery*, and other photo collections. Then answer Workspace question 1.
- Millions of years ago, the Appalachians looked much like today's Rockies. What happened? To find out, visit the Appalachian Highlands Province page about Geologic Provinces of the United States from USGS. Look at the map showing the extent of the mountains. Read the introduction, then scroll to *The making of a supercontinent* and read through the end of the page. Note how the mountains changed over many millions of years. Summarize the key events in the formation of the Appalachians in the table for question 2.
- Scroll to *Carving the Mountain* then answer questions 3 and 4.

Workspace

1. How do today's Appalachians compare to the Rockies in appearance?

2.

Millions Years Ago	Key Events
750	
540	
270	

3. What's the main force "carving" the Appalachians over the past 100 million years?

4. When and how did the Appalachians acquire the distinctive topography with which we are familiar today?

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