

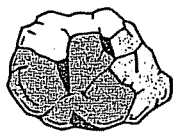

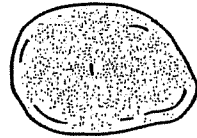
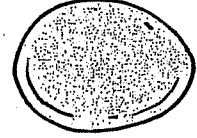
SECTION 2-1

ENRICH

Why Are Many Rocks Round?

Maybe you've noticed that many of the rocks you see are rounded. This is true for the small stones near a river bank and for the large boulders in a field or forest. Sometimes you do see rocks with jagged edges, such as in a rockfall at the bottom of a cliff. These rocks' jagged edges are a sign that they have fairly recently broken off from a larger block of rock. The reason for this is that over time, weathering tends to make rocks round. Study the figures below to find out why.

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	<p><i>Weathering</i></p>  <p><i>Weathering</i></p>		
<p>A Ice wedging has broken this rock off from a larger block of rock. When weathering breaks rocks apart, the pieces have jagged edges and sharp corners.</p>	<p>B Weathering continues to act upon the rock, affecting every part of the rock's surface. The most rapid weathering, though, occurs at the sharp edges and corners. This is because these places have a greater amount of surface area than the more rounded places have.</p>	<p>C The shape of a rock that has the least amount of surface area for its volume is a rounded shape. Therefore, weathering eventually rounds off the jagged edges and sharp corners of the rock.</p>	<p>D Weathering continues to affect the rock. Now instead of changing shape, the rock gets smaller because weathering is affecting its entire surface fairly equally.</p>

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. How would you describe the shape of a rock that has just broken off of a larger block of rock?
2. What is the process that changes the shape of rocks?
3. What part of a rock does weathering attack most rapidly?
4. Why does a rock tend to become rounded?
5. After a rock is rounded, how does weathering affect it?

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