# 2 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, 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 Earth
**D** How the planet changes

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



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## VOCABULARY Geographical features

**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.




