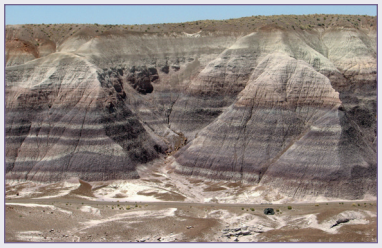
The Rock Cycle **Fact Sheet**

There are three types of rock: igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary. Through processes of erosion, heat and extreme pressure, these rocks are constantly changing in a process called the rock cycle.

Sedimentary
compacted and cemented sediment



Metamorphic
rock which has changed as a result of intense heat and pressure

Igneous
cooled, solidified magma

Weathering and erosion break all three types of rock into small pieces called sediment. Sediment is transported and deposited in layers at the bottom of lakes, seas and oceans.

Extreme heat and pressure from the weight of each new layer of sediment compresses the small pieces of rock. Over millions of years, they are compacted and cemented into solid sedimentary rock.

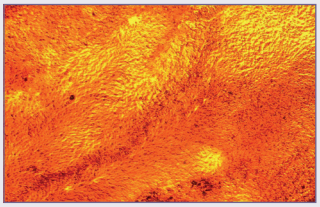
If the rock is exposed, e.g. a cliff face, it will be eroded and begin the cycle again.

If the metamorphic rock is exposed, e.g. through tectonic movement, it will be eroded and begin the cycle again.

If the sedimentary rock is deep underground, it continues to experience extreme heat and pressure and changes into metamorphic rock.

More heat and pressure can form metamorphic rock.

If the metamorphic rock is subjected to even more extreme heat and pressure, it melts and becomes magma.



If the magma moves towards the surface of the Earth or erupts from a volcano, it will cool, harden and form igneous rock.

The igneous rock can be eroded and the cycle will begin again.