

How was the Grand Canyon formed?

Gray's Social Studies
AMI Day 5

The carving of the Grand Canyon is one of the most amazing chapters in the earth's history. The work began about 50 million years ago. Before that time, the Colorado River flowed gently across low plains. Then a huge upward shift in the earth's crust gradually formed the Rocky Mountains. It also pushed up the low plains to form the high Colorado Plateau. Most rivers change course when this happens. The Colorado stayed where it was.



As the land rose over the years, the river dug a deep channel. The steep banks pinched the river and made it run faster. Stones and gravel were carried along by the swift current. They began to carve through the rock below. First they cut through the top layer of creamy-gray limestone. Then they cut through an older layer of pale sandstone, down to bright red sandstone. Centuries passed. Lavender rock, 250 million years old, appeared and then brownish-purple sandstone. Today the busy river is still carving its course through black rocks about 700 million years old.

While all this was happening, landslides shaped the steep cliffs above the river. They made a V-shaped canyon 200 miles long. Wind and weather carved the mile-deep sides into hundreds of peaks and towers. No words or pictures can give a fair idea of the canyon and its many-colored carvings. Each moment of the day changes their beauty.

Mark the circle (○) beside the right answer.

1. The color of the oldest rocks in the Grand Canyon is _____.
 red creamy-gray black brownish-purple
2. Which word in paragraph 1 means slowly, a bit at a time?
 amazing gently upward gradually
3. Which paragraph tells how the Rocky Mountains were formed?
 1 2 3
4. A fact is something known to be true. An opinion is something thought to be true. Mark Fact or Opinion for each sentence below.
Stones are carried along by the Colorado River. Fact Opinion
The Grand Canyon is the world's most beautiful sight. Fact Opinion
Wind and weather have carved the canyon's cliffs. Fact Opinion
5. LOW is to HIGH as slow is to _____. Think how the first two words go together. Then mark the word that goes with slow in the same way.
 deep swift steep huge
6. We can decide from reading the article that _____.
 the Grand Canyon is in Arizona Marble Canyon is also beautiful
 rocks at the earth's surface are younger than rocks deeper down