

SECTION 2 Wind Erosion and Deposition

BEFORE YOU READ

After you read this section, you should be able to answer these questions:

- How can wind erosion shape the landscape?
- How can wind deposition shape the landscape?

National Science Education Standards
ES 1c, 2a

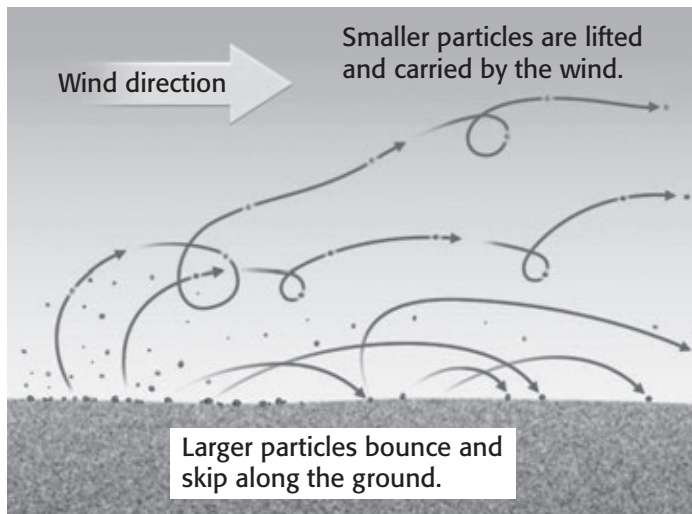
How Can Wind Erosion Affect Rocks?

Wind can move soil, sand, and small pieces of rock. Therefore, wind can cause erosion. However, some areas are more likely to have wind erosion than other areas. For example, plant roots help to hold soil and rock in place. Therefore, areas with few plants, such as deserts and coastlines, are more likely to be eroded by wind. These areas also may be made of small, loose rock particles. Wind can move these particles easily. ✓

Wind can shape rock pieces in three ways: saltation, deflation, and abrasion.

SALTATION

Wind moves large grains of soil, sand, and rock by saltation. **Saltation** happens when sand-sized particles skip and bounce along in the direction that the wind is moving. When moving sand grains hit one another, some of the grains bounce up into the air. These grains fall back to the ground and bump other grains. These other grains can then move forward.



STUDY TIP

Learn New Words As you read this section, underline words you don't understand. When you figure out what they mean, write the words and their definitions in your notebook.

READING CHECK

1. Explain How do plant roots help to prevent wind erosion?

TAKE A LOOK

2. Apply Concepts Why can't the wind lift and carry large particles?

SECTION 2 Wind Erosion and Deposition *continued*

DEFLATION

Wind can blow tiny particles away from larger rock pieces during deflation. **Deflation** happens when wind removes the top layers of fine sediment or soil and leaves behind larger rock pieces. ✓

Deflation can form certain land features. It can produce *desert pavement*, which is a surface made of pebbles and small, broken rocks. In some places, the wind can scoop out small, bowl-shaped areas in sediment on the ground. These areas are called *deflation hollows*.

ABRASION

Wind can grind and wear down rocks by abrasion. **Abrasion** happens when rock or sand wears down larger pieces of rock. Abrasion happens in areas where there are strong winds, loose sand, and soft rocks. The wind blows the loose sand against the rocks. The sand acts like sandpaper to erode, smooth, and polish the rocks.

Process	Description
	Large particles bounce and skip along the ground.
Deflation	
Abrasion	

READING CHECK

3. Define What is deflation?

TAKE A LOOK

4. Complete Fill in the blank spaces in the table.

Critical Thinking

5. Infer What do you think is the reason that fast winds can carry larger particles than slower winds?

What Landforms Are Produced by Wind Deposition?

Wind can carry material over long distances. The wind can carry different amounts and sizes of particles depending on its speed. Fast winds can carry large particles and may move a lot of material. However, all winds eventually slow down and drop their material. The heaviest particles fall first, while light material travels the farthest.

LOESS

Wind can deposit extremely fine material. Thick deposits of this windblown, fine-grained sediment are known as **loess**. Loess feels like talcum powder. Because the wind can carry light-weight material so easily, a loess deposit can be found far away from its source. In the United States, loess deposits are found in the Midwest, the Mississippi Valley, and in Oregon and Washington states.

SECTION 2 Wind Erosion and Deposition *continued*

DUNES

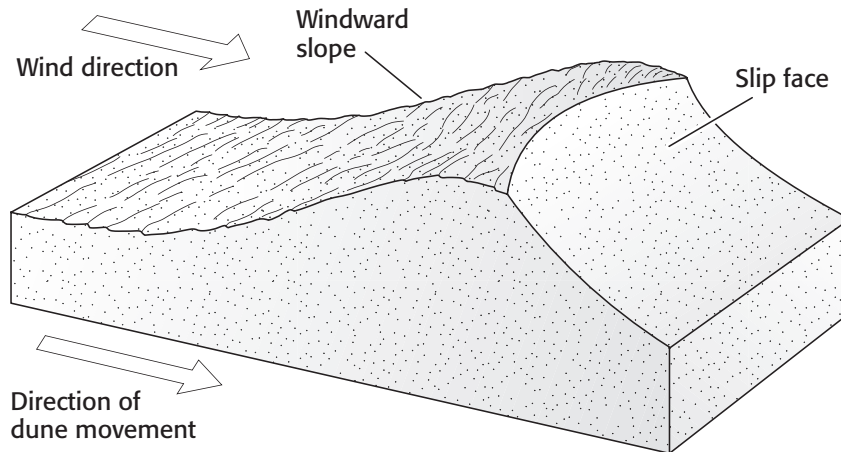
Barriers, such as plants and rocks, can cause wind to slow down. As it slows, the wind deposits particles on top of the barrier. As the dropped material builds up, the barrier gets larger. The barrier causes the wind to slow down even more. More and more material builds up on the barrier until a mound forms.

A mound of wind-deposited sand is called a **dune**. Dunes are common in sandy deserts and along sandy shores of lakes and oceans.

THE MOVEMENT OF DUNES

Wind conditions affect a dune's shape and size. As the wind blows sand through a desert, it is removed from some places and deposited in others. This can cause dunes to seem to move across the desert.

In general, dunes move in the same direction the wind is blowing. A dune has one gently sloped side and one steep side. The gently sloped side faces the wind. It is called the *windward slope*. The wind constantly moves sand up this side. As sand moves over the top of the dune, the sand slides down the steep side. The steep side is called the *slip face*. ✓



The wind blows sand up the windward slope of the dune. The sand moves over the top of the dune and falls down the steep slip face. In this way, dunes move across the land in the direction that the wind blows.

STANDARDS CHECK

ES 1c Land forms are the result of a combination of constructive and destructive forces. Constructive forces include crustal deformation, volcanic eruption, and deposition of sediment, while destructive forces include weathering and erosion.

6. Define What is a dune?

READING CHECK

7. Identify In what direction do dunes generally move?

TAKE A LOOK

8. Compare How is the windward slope of a dune different from the slip face?

Section 2 Review

NSES ES 1c, 2a

SECTION VOCABULARY

abrasion the grinding and wearing away of rock surfaces through the mechanical action of other rock or sand particles

deflation a form of wind erosion in which fine, dry soil particles are blown away

dune a mound of wind-deposited sand that moves as a result of the action of wind

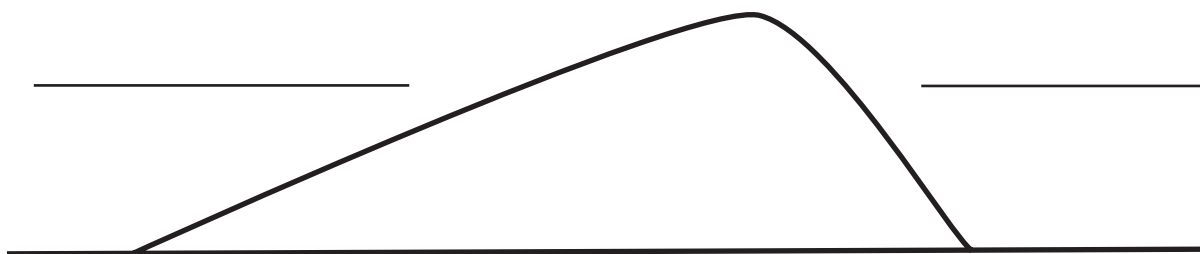
loess fine-grained sediments of quartz, feldspar, hornblende, mica, and clay deposited by the wind

saltation the movement of sand or other sediments by short jumps and bounces that is caused by wind or water

1. **Identify** Give two land features that can form because of deflation.

2. **Describe** What areas are most likely to be affected by wind erosion? Give two examples.

3. **Identify** The figure shows a drawing of a sand dune. Label the windward slope and the slip face. Draw an arrow to show the direction of the wind.



4. **Explain** How do dunes form?

5. **Apply Concepts** Wind can transport particles of many different sizes. What sized particles are probably carried the farthest by the wind? Explain your answer.
