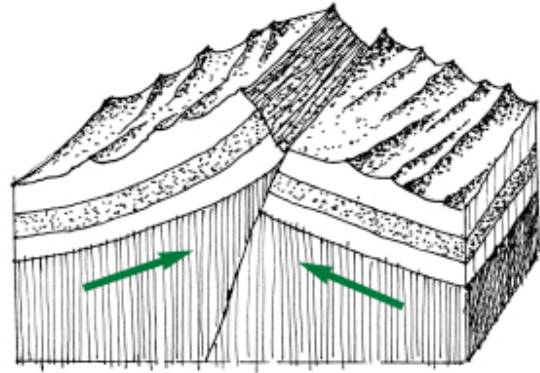


Mountain Ranges

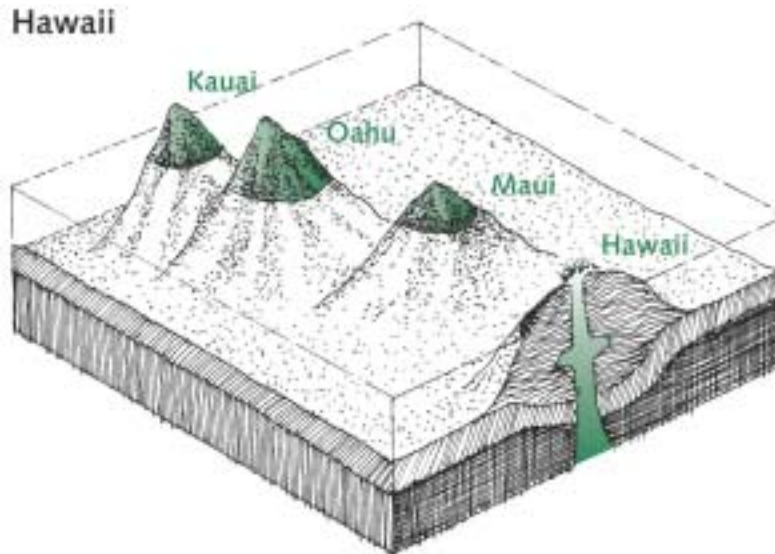
Earth's crust, or top layer, is divided into seven huge chunks of ocean floor and land called **plates**. These plates actually move around! The study of how these plates move is called **plate tectonics**. Today we know that they move at approximately the same speed at which your fingernails grow. All the plates are constantly, slowly shifting. Some move away from each other, and some move directly toward each other. When two plates move slowly toward each other and push into each other, a mountain range can form. The plates slowly push their edges up into jagged peaks as they press together.



You try it! Try gently pressing the fingertips of both of your hands together, tips against tips. See if you can make a mountain with your fingers!

Volcanic Islands

One way an **island** is formed is when a **volcano** erupts underwater. With each eruption of the volcano, lava builds up under the ocean's surface until the top rises out of the water. Over time, more and more lava is released from the volcano and hardens on top of the previous lava. This causes the mass to continue to grow until it is so large that it rises above the sea and becomes an island, such as those that make up the state of Hawaii.



Here you can see how each island in Hawaii is a mountain underwater that rises above the surface of the Pacific Ocean.