

## What Is a Rock?

By Haris Lefteri

If we do not look closely, all rocks appear the same. However, there are a number of different kinds of rocks, and each kind is made a different way.

All rocks are made up of one or more minerals. Minerals are **inorganic** (not alive) substances. (Humans, plants and animals are organic.) We are going to learn today about three types of rocks. The first type is formed when molten rock cools. Molten rock exists far below Earth's surface where there are very high temperatures. **Igneous rocks** are formed when molten rock cools quickly on Earth's surface or when molten rock slowly cools far beneath the surface. One way molten rock rises to the surface is through a volcano.

The second type of rocks is **sedimentary rock** that is formed when pressure (weight) is applied to layers of sediments under Earth's surface. Sediments are fragments of rocks that are created when rocks are broken into tiny pieces by weather. On top of Earth's surface, where extreme amounts of pressure are not present, sediments are also found in dirt and sand.

Last, but not least, are **metamorphic rocks**, which are formed from an older "parent" rock (either igneous or sedimentary) under intense heat and pressure beneath the Earth's surface. The heat and pressure change the rocks so much that they look and feel different. They also then have a new name, metamorphic.