

We did a practical activity to demonstrate how volcanoes are formed and how and why they erupt. We looked at what happens when tectonic plates move in different ways along the plate boundaries. We used crackers to represent the tectonic plates and red food colouring mixed with yoghurt to represent the magma in the Earth's mantle. Here are our findings:

Transform boundaries

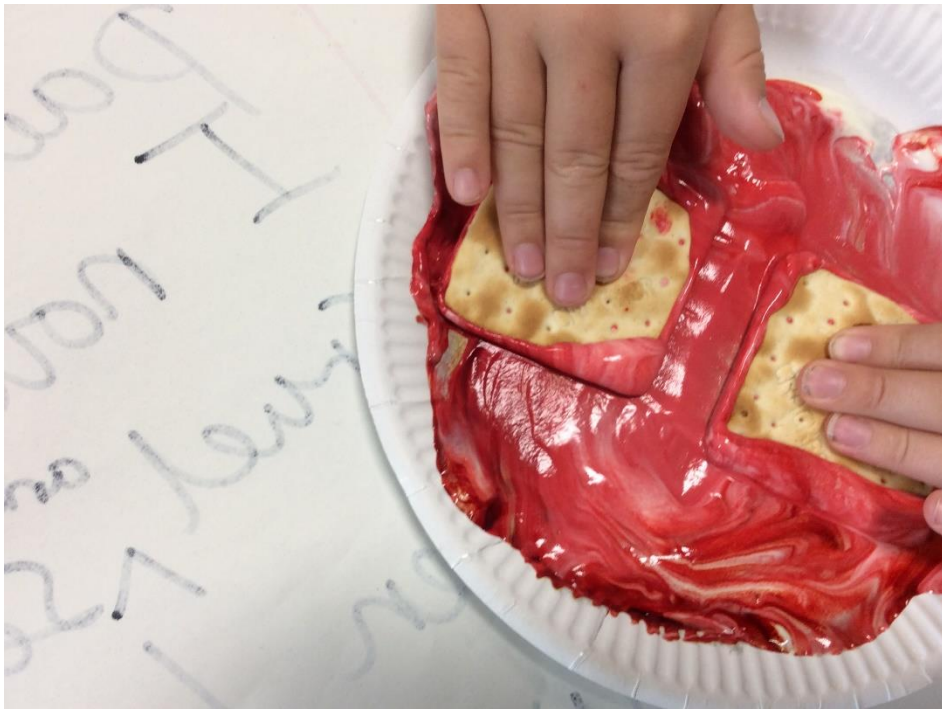
This type of boundary occurs when two plates grind past each other.



At transform boundaries, plates move in opposite directions slowly grinding past each other, occasionally getting snagged on each other. As pressure builds, the plates finally slip, releasing a jolt of energy that we feel as an earthquake. Magma is released upwards along the plate boundary.

Divergent boundaries

Divergent boundaries occur when two plates move away from each other.



Most active divergent boundaries occur where two oceanic plates move away from each other. Hot magma flows up where the plates separate, forming large underwater lava flows and creating new seafloor and even volcanic islands.

Convergent boundaries

Convergent boundaries are the final type of boundary and they occur when two plates move towards each other.



When two plates move towards each other they can either collide forming mountains or one plate can slide under the other at the subduction zone.