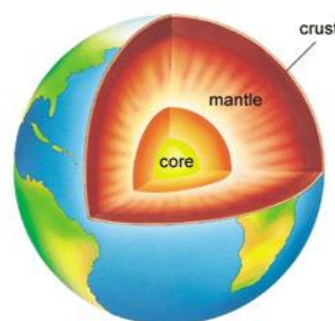


Year 3 Unit 3: Europe, Teacher Subject Knowledge Guide
How did continents come to be?
Three Layers

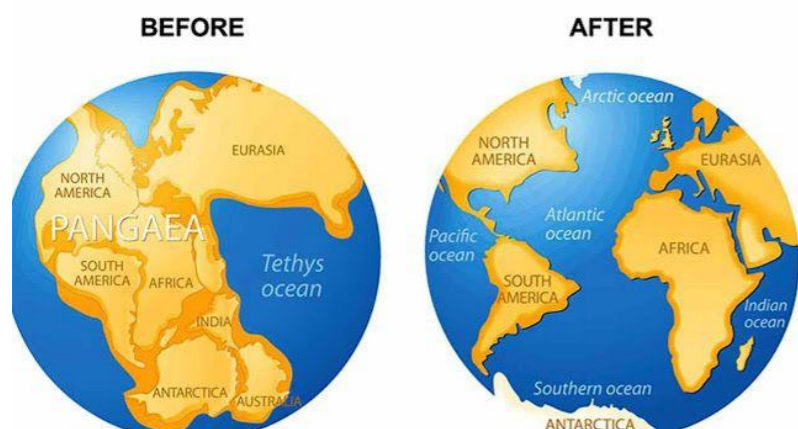
The Earth formed 4.6 billion years ago from a great, swirling cloud of dust and gas. The continuous smashing of space debris and the pull of gravity made the inside of Earth heat up. As the heat increased, some of Earth's rocky materials melted and rose to the surface, where they cooled and formed a crust. Heavier material sank toward Earth's centre. Eventually, the earth came to have three main layers: the **core**, the **mantle**, and the **crust**.


Tectonic Plates

The crust and the top portion of the mantle formed a rigid shell around the earth that is broken up into huge sections called **tectonic plates**. The heat from inside the earth causes the plates to slide around on the molten mantle. Today, tectonic plates continue to slowly slide around the surface, just as they have been doing for hundreds of millions of years. Geologists believe the interaction of the plates, a process called plate tectonics, contributed to the creation of continents.

Pangaea

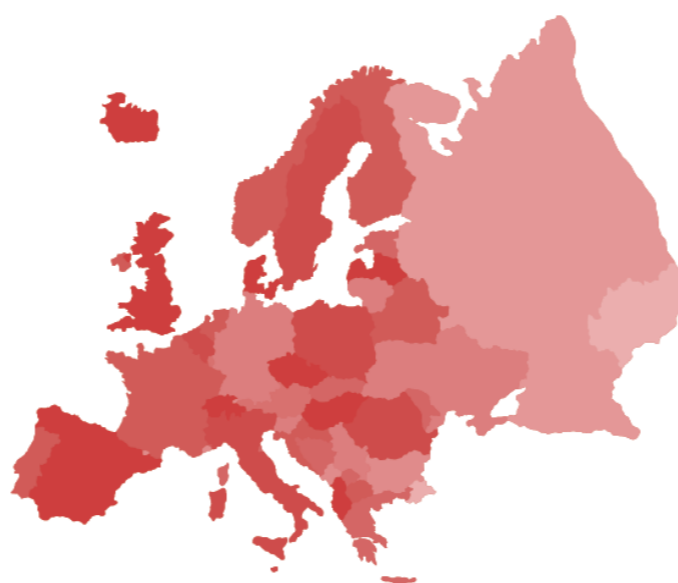
The continents have not always been where they are today. About 480 million years ago, most continents were scattered chunks of land lying along or south of the Equator. Millions of years of continuous tectonic activity changed their positions, and by 240 million years ago, almost all of the world's land was joined in a single, huge continent. Geologists call this supercontinent Pangaea, which means "all lands" in Greek. By about 200 million years ago, the forces that helped form Pangaea caused the supercontinent to begin to break apart. The pieces of Pangaea that began to move apart were the beginnings of the continents that we know today. Gradually, the different landmasses moved to their present locations.


What is the difference between Europe and the EU?

The difference between Europe and the European Union is that whilst Europe is a continent or geographical region, the European Union is a political and economic union of 27 different states (28 before the United Kingdom left).

The European Union's founding members were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany. The current members of the European Union are mostly geographically part of Europe and are:

Austria	France	Malta
Belgium	Germany	Netherlands
Bulgaria	Greece	Poland
Croatia	Hungary	Portugal
Cyprus	Ireland	Romania
Czech Republic	Italy	Slovakia
Denmark	Latvia	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden


Which names are we using for the continents?

Depending on which map you look at, different continents may have different names. This unit (and all other AC+ units) uses: Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Asia, Antarctica and Oceania.

On many maps you will see 'Eurasia' (Europe and Asia merged). The continents of Europe and Asia are part of a single, enormous piece of land known as Eurasia however, to geographers, continents are also culturally different. Linguistically and ethnically, the areas of Asia and Europe are distinct. Because of this, most geographers divide Eurasia into Europe and Asia. An imaginary line, runs between the two from the northern Ural Mountains in Russia to the Caspian and Black Seas. The line separates Europe, to the west, from Asia, to the east.

Which countries are transcontinental?

A transcontinental country is located on more than one continent. Whilst there are many countries which have overseas territories, only a small number have land which sits across an overland continental boundary and because the boundary between Europe and Asia is very much man-made, most of the transcontinental countries are located along this border.

Over time, the border between Asia and Europe has been disputed and has followed slightly different paths but the current, and most universally accepted boundary means that there are five different countries with territory in both Asia and Europe. They are Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey.

Azerbaijan is not classed as part of Europe in this unit. The country is located mainly within Asia in terms of land but some of the regions within Azerbaijan are geographically within Europe. Those regions place around 5% of the total population of Azerbaijan within Europe. Georgia is also not classed as part of Europe in this unit and is also located mainly within Asia. Just like within Azerbaijan, a small part of the country lies within Europe and so does around 5% of the total population.

Kazakhstan is not classed as part of Europe in this unit. The country is mainly located in Central Asia but a small portion of the land extends into Eastern Europe. The country is very much Asian in culture and ethnicity but there are European influences from when Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union and the earlier Russian Empire. Around 15% of the total population of Kazakhstan are geographically within Europe.

Russia is classed as part of Europe in this unit. Pupils are notified that Russia is transcontinental and has land within both Europe and Asia. Although the land of Russia is mostly within Asia, it is often considered a European country because of its historical, cultural, ethnical and political ties to the continent. Also, around 80% of the population of Russia live within the European portion of the land and Russia's capital city is also within the borders of Europe.

Turkey is classed as part of Europe in this unit. Pupils are notified that the country is also viewed as being transcontinental. Almost all of Turkey falls into Western Asia (the Middle East) and only a small portion of the land falls within Europe – around 14% of the total population. The capital city of Turkey (Ankara) is in Asia but largest city in Turkey (Istanbul) is transcontinental as part of the city is in Europe and part of the city is in Asia.

