


**Chapter 5 Weathering, Soil, and Mass Movements****Section 5.2 Soil***This section describes the characteristics of soil.***Reading Strategy**

**Comparing and Contrasting** As you read this section, compare the three types of soils by completing the table. For more information on this Reading Strategy, see the **Reading and Study Skills** in the **Skills and Reference Handbook** at the end of your textbook.


Soil Type	Where It's Found
Pedalfer	a.
Pedocal	b.
Laterite	c.

**Characteristics of Soil***Match each description to its term.*

Description	Term
_____ 1. layer of rock and mineral fragments	a. soil
_____ 2. part of the regolith that supports growth of plants	b. humus
_____ 3. decayed remains of organisms	c. regolith

4.  Is the following sentence true or false? Soil has four major components: mineral matter, humus, water, and air. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Humus is a source of \_\_\_\_\_, and it increases soil's ability to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about the functions that soil water serves in the soil.
- Soil water provides the moisture needed for chemical reactions that sustain life.
  - Soil water is the source of carbon dioxide that plants use in photosynthesis.
  - Soil water provides nutrients in a form that plants can use.
  - All soils contain the same amount of soil water.

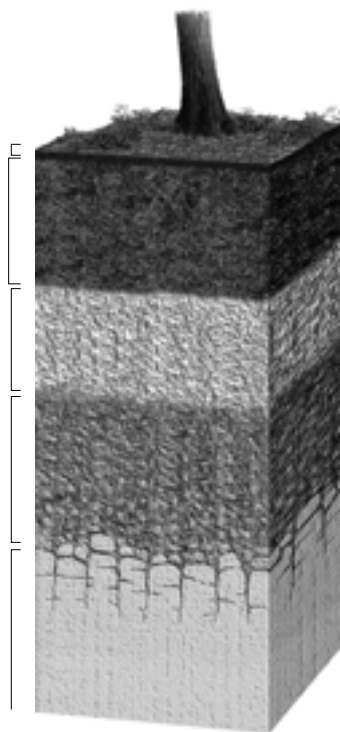
**Soil Formation**

7.  The most important factors in soil formation are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

## Chapter 5 Weathering, Soil, and Mass Movements

### The Soil Profile

8. Write a brief description of each soil horizon on the figure below and label each of the soil horizons with the appropriate identifying letter.



### Soil Types

9. Write a brief description of each type of soil.

pedalfer \_\_\_\_\_  
 pedocal \_\_\_\_\_  
 laterite \_\_\_\_\_

10. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about laterite.

- a. Laterite is not a useful material for making bricks.
- b. Laterite contains almost no organic matter.
- c. Laterite is one of the poorest soils for agriculture.
- d. In a newly cleared field, laterite can support agriculture for only a few years.

### Soil Erosion

11. Is the following sentence true or false? Human activities, such as farming, logging, and construction, have slowed down the amount of erosion that occurs today. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is the following sentence true or false? In many regions of the world, soil is eroding faster than it is being formed.  
 \_\_\_\_\_