

Notes:

The Shrinking Earth Theory

There have been many theories about why the Earth has a wrinkled surface that is covered with mountains and deep ocean trenches. One of the main theories of the last century was the 'Shrinking Earth' theory. According to that theory, the Earth started off as a molten ball of rock material, orbiting the Sun. As this ball cooled, a skin was formed, much like skin forms on cooling custard. The cooled outer skin is referred to as the Crust.

When things cool down, it is well known that they shrink. This would cause the solid crust to wrinkle, in the same way that the skin of an apple wrinkles when it has been left for too long without being eaten. The mountain ranges of the Earth were thought to be the wrinkles on the Crust. This idea was well accepted in scientific circles.

The Shrinking Earth theory predicted that mountain ranges would appear randomly all over the Earth's surface. It also predicted that mountains would constantly grow higher. Another part of the theory stated that volcanoes and Earthquakes would occur at random, all over the surface of the Earth. As with all scientific ideas, eventually someone challenged it when new information could not be made to fit in with the theory.

Reflection Questions:

In your own words, explain how mountain ranges are created according to the Shrinking Earth Theory.

What prediction does this theory make about the locations of mountains, volcanoes, and earthquakes?

If you were going to challenge this theory, what **data** would you collect?

1

Read the article. **Highlight or underline** important facts as you go.

Write a “?” next to anything you don't understand or want to know more about.

2

After you have read the article, go back through it again.

Select 3 or 4 key terms or ideas to illustrate or summarize in the “Notes Column”.

3

Answer the “Reflection Questions” using complete sentences.

4

When told to do so, cut and paste the article onto page 31 in your notebook.