

Unit 5: Changes to Earth's Land

Instructional Days: 20

Unit Summary***In what ways do humans slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land?***

In this unit of study, students apply their understanding of the idea that wind and water can change the shape of land to compare design solutions to slow or prevent such change. The crosscutting concepts of *stability and change*; *structure and function*; and *the influence of engineering, technology, and science on society and the natural world* are called out as organizing concepts for these disciplinary core ideas. Students demonstrate grade-appropriate proficiency in *asking questions and defining problems*, *developing and using models*, and *constructing explanations and designing solutions*. Students are also expected to use these practices to demonstrate understanding of the core ideas.

This unit is based on 2-ESS1-1, 2-ESS2-1, K-2-ETS1-1, and K-2-ETS1-2.

Student Learning Objectives

Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly. *[Clarification Statement: Examples of events and timescales could include volcanic explosions and earthquakes, which happen quickly and erosion of rocks, which occurs slowly.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include quantitative measurements of timescales.]* ([2-ESS1-1](#))

Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land.* *[Clarification Statement: Examples of solutions could include different designs of dikes and windbreaks to hold back wind and water, and different designs for using shrubs, grass, and trees to hold back the land.]* ([2-ESS2-1](#))

Ask questions, make observations, and gather information about a situation people want to change to define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool. ([K-2-ETS1-1](#))

Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem. ([K-2-ETS1-2](#))

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2-ESS1-1	Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly
2-ESS2-1	Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land
K-2-ETS1-1	Ask questions, make observations, and gather information about a situation people want to change to define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool
K-2-ETS1-2	Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem
ETS1.A	A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering
ETS1.B	Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models
ETS1.C	Because there is always more than one possible solution to a problem, it is useful to compare and test designs
ESS1.C	Some events happen very quickly; others occur very slowly, over a time period much longer than one can observe
ESS2.A	Wind and water can change the shape of the land
ESS2.B	Maps show where things are located
ESS2.C	Water is found in the ocean, rivers, lakes, and ponds
ETS1.C	Because there is always more than one possible solution to a problem, it is useful to compare and test designs

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Quick Links[Unit Sequence p. 2](#)[Research on Learning p. 5](#)[Sample Open Education Resources p. 7](#)[What it Looks Like in the Classroom p. 3](#)[Prior Learning p. 5](#)[Teacher Professional Learning Resources p. 7](#)[Connecting with ELA/Literacy and Math p. 4](#)[Future Learning p. 6](#)[Appendix A: NGSS and Foundations p. 9](#)[Modifications p. 5](#)[Connections to Other Units p. 6](#)**Enduring Understandings**

- Earth changes over time through a variety of events.
- The shape of land changes by natural forces such as wind and water.
- Earth can change, but dikes, windbreaks, and natural resources can hold back the land.
- Maps help to locate where kinds of land and bodies of water are located.
- Water can be found in oceans, rivers, lakes, and ponds
- Water can exist as both solid ice and as a liquid.

Essential Questions

- What factors change how the earth looks?
- What events happen quickly that change the Earth? What events happen slowly that change the Earth?
- How can we prevent wind and water from changing the land?
- How do we represent the shapes and kinds of land and bodies of water in an area?
- What forms can water take?

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Unit Sequence	
<i>Part A: What evidence can we find to prove that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly?</i>	
Concepts	Formative Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some events happen very quickly; others occur very slowly over a time period much longer than one can observe. • Things may change slowly or rapidly. 	<p><i>Students who understand the concepts are able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make observations from several sources to construct an evidence-based account for natural phenomena. • Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly. (<i>Assessment does not include quantitative measurements of timescales.</i>) Some examples of these events include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Volcanic explosions ✓ Earthquakes ✓ Erosion of rocks.

Unit Sequence	
<i>Part B: In what ways do humans slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land?</i>	
Concepts	Formative Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things may change slowly or rapidly. • Developing and using technology has impacts on the natural world. • Scientists study the natural and material world. • The shape and stability of structures of natural and designed objects are related to their function(s). • Wind and water can change the shape of the land. 	<p><i>Students who understand the concepts are able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare multiple solutions to a problem. • Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land. Examples of solutions could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Different designs of dikes and windbreaks to hold back wind and water ✓ Different designs for using shrubs, grass, and trees to

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Because there is always more than one possible solution to a problem, it is useful to compare and test designs.• A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering.• Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in thinking about problems.• Before beginning to design a solution, it is important to clearly understand the problem.• Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models. These representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem's solutions to other people.	<p>hold back the land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions based on observations to find more information about the natural and/or designed world.• Ask questions, make observations, and gather information about a situation people want to change to define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool.• Define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool.• Develop a simple model based on evidence to represent a proposed object or tool.• Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem.
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What It Looks Like in the Classroom

In this unit of study, students learn that a situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering. Before beginning to design a solution, it is important to clearly understand the problem, and asking questions, making observations and gathering information are helpful in thinking about and clarifying problems. Students learn that designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models, and that these representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem's solutions to other people. As outlined in the narrative above, students will develop simple sketches or drawings showing how humans have helped minimized the effects of a chosen Earth event.

Students use evidence from several sources to develop an understanding that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly. Because some events happen too quickly to observe, and others too slowly, we often rely on models and simulations to help us understand how changes to the surface of the Earth are caused by a number of different Earth events. For example,

- ✓ Volcanic eruptions are Earth events that happen very quickly. As volcanic eruptions occur, ash and lava are quickly emitted from the volcano. The flow of lava from the volcano causes immediate changes to the landscape as it flows and cools.
- ✓ Flooding can happen quickly during events such as hurricanes and tsunamis. Flooding can cause rapid changes to the surface of the Earth.
- ✓ Rainfall is an event that recurs often over long periods of time and will gradually lead to the weathering and erosion of rocks and soil.

In order to gather information to use as evidence, students need to make observations. They can easily look for evidence of changes caused by rain, flooding, or drought. However, actually observing Earth events as they happen is often not possible; therefore, students will need opportunities to observe different types of Earth events using models, simulations, video, and other media and online sources. At this grade level, quantitative measurements of timescales are not important. Students do need to see the kinds of changes that Earth events cause, and whether the changes are rapid or slow.

Engaging in engineering design helps students understand that a situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering. Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in clearly understanding the problem. Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models. These representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem's solutions to other people. In this unit of study, students need the opportunity to engage in the engineering design process in order to generate and compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land. Students are not expected to come

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up with original solutions, although original solutions are always welcome. The emphasis is on asking questions, making observations, and gathering information in order to compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the land. This process should include the following steps:

- ✓ As a class, with teacher guidance, students brainstorm a list of natural Earth events, such as volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, or floods. The class selects one Earth event to research in order to gather more information.
- ✓ As a class or in small groups, with guidance, students conduct research on the selected Earth event using books and other reliable sources. They gather information about the problems that are caused by the selected event, and gather information on the ways in which humans have minimized the effects of the chosen earth event. For example,
 - Different designs of dikes or dams to hold back water,
 - Different designs of windbreaks to hold back wind, or
 - Different designs for using plants (shrubs, grass, and/or trees) to hold back the land.
- ✓ Next, students look for examples in their community of ways that humans have minimized the effect of natural Earth events. This can be accomplished through a nature walk or short hike around the schoolyard, during a field trip, or students can make observations around their own neighborhoods. If available, students can carry digital cameras (or other technology that allows them to take pictures) in order to document any examples they find.
- ✓ Groups select one solution they have found through research and develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how it minimizes the effects of the selected Earth event.
- ✓ Groups should prepare a presentation using their sketches, drawings, or models, and present them to the class.

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Connecting with English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics*English Language Arts*

Students participate in shared research to gather information about Earth events from texts and other media and digital resources. They will use this information to answer questions and describe key ideas and details about ways in which the land can change and what causes these changes. Students should also have opportunities to compose a writing piece, either independently or collaboratively with peers, using digital tools to produce and publish their writing. Students should describe connections between Earth events and the changes they cause, and they should include photographs, videos, poems, dioramas, models, drawings, or other visual displays of their work, when appropriate, to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

Mathematics

Students have multiple opportunities to reason abstractly and quantitatively as they gather information from media sources. Students can organize data into picture graphs or bar graphs in order to make comparisons. For example, students can graph rainfall amounts. Students can use the data to solve simple addition and subtraction problems using information from the graphs to determine the amount of change that has occurred to local landforms. For example, a gulley was 17 inches deep before a rainstorm and 32 inches deep after a rainstorm. How much deeper is it after the rainstorm? Students must also have an understanding of place value as they encounter the varying timescales on which Earth events can occur. For example, students understand that a period of thousands of years is much longer than a period of hundreds of years, which in turn is much longer than a period of tens of years. In addition, teachers should give students opportunities to work with large numbers as they describe length, height, size, and distance when learning about Earth events and the changes they cause. For example, students might write about a canyon that is 550 feet deep, a river that is 687 miles long, or a forest that began growing about 200 years ago.

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Modifications

(Note: Teachers identify the modifications that they will use in the unit. See NGSS Appendix D: [All Standards, All Students/Case Studies](#) for vignettes and explanations of the modifications.)

- Structure lessons around questions that are authentic, relate to students' interests, social/family background and knowledge of their community.
- Provide students with multiple choices for how they can represent their understandings (e.g. multisensory techniques-auditory/visual aids; pictures, illustrations, graphs, charts, data tables, multimedia, modeling).
- Provide opportunities for students to connect with people of similar backgrounds (e.g. conversations via digital tool such as SKYPE, experts from the community helping with a project, journal articles, and biographies).
- Provide multiple grouping opportunities for students to share their ideas and to encourage work among various backgrounds and cultures (e.g. multiple representation and multimodal experiences).
- Engage students with a variety of Science and Engineering practices to provide students with multiple entry points and multiple ways to demonstrate their understandings.
- Use project-based science learning to connect science with observable phenomena.
- Structure the learning around explaining or solving a social or community-based issue.
- Provide ELL students with multiple literacy strategies.
- Collaborate with after-school programs or clubs to extend learning opportunities.
- Restructure lesson using UDL principals (http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html#.VXmoXcfD_UA).

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Research on Student Learning

Students of all ages may hold the view that the world was always as it is now, or that any changes that have occurred must have been sudden and comprehensive. The students in these studies did not, however, have any formal instruction on the topics investigated ([NSDL, 2015](#))

Prior Learning**Kindergarten Unit 1: Pushes and Pulls**

- A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering.
- Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in thinking about problems.
- Before beginning to design a solution, it is important to clearly understand the problem.
- Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models. These representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem's solutions to other people.
- Because there is always more than one possible solution to a problem, it is useful to compare and test designs.

Future Learning**Grade 3 Unit 7: Using Evidence to Understand Change in Environments**

- When the environment changes in ways that affect a place's physical characteristics, temperature, or availability of resources, some organisms survive and reproduce, others move to new locations, yet others move into the transformed environment, and some die. (*secondary*)

Grade 4 Unit 1: Weathering and Erosion

- Rainfall helps to shape the land and affects the types of living things found in a region. Water, ice, wind, living organisms, and gravity break rocks, soils, and sediments into smaller particles and move them around.

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Grade 4 Unit 2: Earth Processes

- Testing a solution involves investigating how well it performs under a range of likely conditions. (*secondary*)

Grade 4 Unit 7: Using Engineering Design with Force and Motion Systems

- Possible solutions to a problem are limited by available materials and resources (constraints). The success of a designed solution is determined by considering the desired features of a solution (criteria). Different proposals for solutions can be compared on the basis of how well each one meets the specified criteria for success or how well each takes the constraints into account. (*secondary*)
- Different solutions need to be tested in order to determine which of them best solves the problem, given the criteria and the constraints. (*secondary*)

Grade 5 Unit 5: Earth Systems

- Earth's major systems are the geosphere (solid and molten rock, soil, and sediments), the hydrosphere (water and ice), the atmosphere (air), and the biosphere (living things, including humans). These systems interact in multiple ways to affect Earth's surface materials and processes. The ocean supports a variety of ecosystems and organisms, shapes landforms, and influences climate. Winds and clouds in the atmosphere interact with the landforms to determine patterns of weather.

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Connections to Other Units**Grade 2 Unit 1: Relationships in Habitats and Unit 2: Properties of Matter**

- A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering.
- Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in thinking about problems.
- Before beginning to design a solution, it is important to clearly understand the problem.
- Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models. These representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem's solutions to other people.
- Because there is always more than one possible solution to a problem, it is useful to compare and test designs.
- A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering.

Sample of Open Education Resources[How Can Water Change the Shape of the Land?](#)

In this lesson plan children investigate water erosion. Students make a sand tower and observe the erosion as they drop water on it. Students observe, illustrate, and record notes about the process. Short videos and a read aloud also further support understanding of the Performance Expectation.

[How Can Wind Change the Shape of the Land?](#)

This lesson builds on another lesson created by Jeri Faber in which students discovered how water changes the earth. For this lesson, students take part in a teacher-led investigation to show how wind changes the land. The children use straws to blow on a small mound or hill of sand. As each child takes a turn, the other students record their detailed observations that will later be used to draw conclusions. Students also watch a short video on wind erosion and discuss the new learning with partners.

[Finding Erosion at Our School](#)

In this lesson, students walk around the school grounds, neighborhood, or another area of their community to locate evidence of erosion. Various problems caused by erosion are discussed and a solution is developed for one of the problems. This lesson is one in a series on erosion by Jeri Faber. A follow-up lesson is available where students compare their erosion design solutions.

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Teacher Professional Learning Resources**Assessment for the Next Generation Science Standards**

The presenters were Joan Herman, Co-Director Emeritus of the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST) at UCLA; and Nancy Butler Songer, Professor of Science Education and Learning Technologies, University of Michigan.

Dr. Herman began the presentation by summarizing a report by the National Research Council on assessment for the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). She talked about the development of the report and shared key findings. Next, Dr. Songer discussed challenges for classroom implementation and provided examples of tasks that can be used with students to assess their proficiency on the NGSS performance expectations. Participants had the opportunity to submit questions and share their feedback in the chat.

View the [resource collection](#).

Continue discussing this topic in the [community forums](#).

NGSS Crosscutting Concepts: Patterns

The presenter was Kristin Gunckel from the University of Arizona. Dr. Gunckel began the presentation by discussing how patterns fit in with experiences and explanations to make up scientific inquiry. Then she talked about the role of patterns in NGSS and showed how the crosscutting concept of patterns progresses across grade bands. After participants shared their ideas about using patterns in their own classrooms, Dr. Gunckel shared instructional examples from the elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

NGSS Crosscutting Concepts: Structure and Function

The presenters were Cindy Hmelo-Silver and Rebecca Jordan from Rutgers University. Dr. Hmelo-Silver and Dr. Jordan began the presentation by discussing the role of the crosscutting concept of structure and function within NGSS. They then asked participants to think about the example of a sponge and discuss in the chat how a sponge's structure relates to its function. The presenters introduced the Structure-Behavior-Function (SBF) theory and talked about the importance of examining the relationships between mechanisms and structures. They also discussed the use of models to explore these concepts. Participants drew their own models for one example and shared their thoughts about using this strategy in the classroom.

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ESS.2 NGSS Core Ideas: Earth's Systems

The presenter was Jill Wertheim from National Geographic Society. The program featured strategies for teaching about Earth science concepts that answer questions such as "What regulates weather and climate?" and "What causes earthquakes and volcanoes?"

Dr. Wertheim began the presentation by introducing a framework for thinking about content related to Earth systems. She then showed learning progressions for each concept within the Earth's Systems disciplinary core idea and shared resources and strategies for addressing student preconceptions. Dr. Wertheim also talked about changes in the way NGSS addresses these ideas compared to previous common approaches.

Continue the discussion in the [community forums](#).

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Appendix A: NGSS and Foundations for the Unit

Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly. *[Clarification Statement: Examples of events and timescales could include volcanic explosions and earthquakes, which happen quickly and erosion of rocks, which occurs slowly.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment does not include quantitative measurements of timescales.]* [\(2-ESS1-1\)](#)

Compare multiple solutions designed to slow or prevent wind or water from changing the shape of the land. *[Clarification Statement: Examples of solutions could include different designs of dikes and windbreaks to hold back wind and water, and different designs for using shrubs, grass, and trees to hold back the land.]* [\(2-ESS2-1\)](#)

Ask questions, make observations, and gather information about a situation people want to change to define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool. [\(K-2-ETS1-1\)](#)

Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem. [\(K-2-ETS1-2\)](#)

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document [A Framework for K-12 Science Education](#):

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
<p>Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make observations from several sources to construct an evidence-based account for natural phenomena. (2-ESS1-1) • Compare multiple solutions to a problem. (2-ESS2-1) 	<p>ESS1.C: The History of Planet Earth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some events happen very quickly; others occur very slowly, over a time period much longer than one can observe. (2-ESS1-1) <p>ESS2.A: Earth Materials and Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind and water can change the shape of the land. (2-ESS2-1) 	<p>Stability and Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things may change slowly or rapidly. (2-ESS1-1) • Things may change slowly or rapidly. (2-ESS2-1) <p>Structure and Function</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shape and stability of structures of natural and designed objects are related to their

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<p>Asking Questions and Defining Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions based on observations to find more information about the natural and/or designed world(s). (K-2-ETS1-1) • Define a simple problem that can be solved through the development of a new or improved object or tool. (K-2-ETS1-1) <p>Developing and Using Models</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a simple model based on evidence to represent a proposed object or tool. (K-2-ETS1-2) 	<p>ETS1.A: Defining and Delimiting Engineering Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A situation that people want to change or create can be approached as a problem to be solved through engineering. (K-2-ETS1-1) • Asking questions, making observations, and gathering information are helpful in thinking about problems. (K-2-ETS1-1) • Before beginning to design a solution, it is important to clearly understand the problem. (K-2-ETS1-1) <p>ETS1.B: Developing Possible Solutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs can be conveyed through sketches, drawings, or physical models. These representations are useful in communicating ideas for a problem’s solutions to other people. (K-2-ETS1-2) 	<p>function(s). (K-2-ETS1-2)</p> <p><i>Connections to Engineering, Technology, and Applications of Science</i></p> <p>Influence of Engineering, Technology, and Science on Society and the Natural World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and using technology has impacts on the natural world. (2-ESS2-1) <p><i>Connections to Nature of Science</i></p> <p>Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists study the natural and material world. (2-ESS2-1)
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English Language Arts	Mathematics
<p>Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (2-ESS1-1), (K-2-ETS1-1) RI.2.1</p> <p>Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text. (2-ESS1-1) RI.2.3</p> <p>With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers. (2-ESS1-1), (K-2-ETS1-1) W.2.6</p> <p>Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations). (2-ESS1-1) W.2.7</p> <p>Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question. (2-ESS1-1), (K-2-ETS1-1) W.2.8</p> <p>Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. (2-ESS1-1) SL.2.2</p> <p>Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text. (2-ESS2-1) RI.2.3</p> <p>Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. (K-2-ETS1-2) SL.2.5</p> <p>Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. (2-ESS2-1) RI.2.9</p>	<p>Reason abstractly and quantitatively. (2-ESS1-1), (2-ESS2-1), (K-2-ETS1-1) MP.2</p> <p>Model with mathematics. (2-ESS1-1), (2-ESS2-1) MP.4</p> <p>Use appropriate tools strategically. (2-ESS2-1, (K-2-ETS1-1) MP.5</p> <p>Understand place value. (2-ESS1-1) 2.NBT.A</p> <p>Use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve word problems involving lengths that are given in the same units, e.g., by using drawings (such as drawings of rulers) and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem. (2-ESS2-1) 2.MD.B.5</p> <p>Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart, and compare problems using information presented in a bar graph. (K-2-ETS1-1) 2.MD.D.10</p>

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Common Vocabulary	
Earth	Liquid water
Lake River	Melt
Temperature	Pond
Area	Solid
Exist	Precipitation
Gravity	Stream
Liquid	Underground
Flow	Erosion
Form	Glacier
Freeze	Ocean