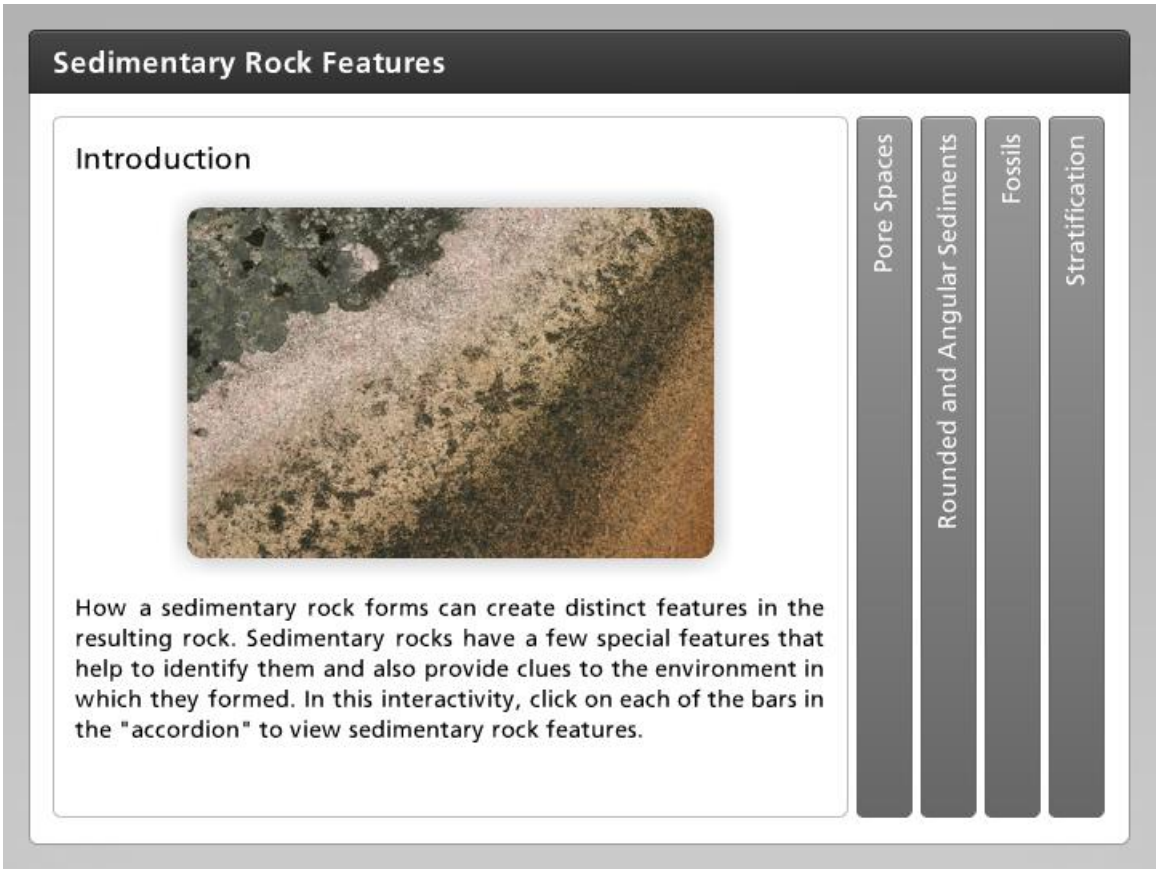
Module 6: Rocks
Topic 2 Content: Sedimentary Rock Features Notes

Introduction



How a sedimentary rock forms can create distinct features in the resulting rock. Sedimentary rocks have a few special features that help to identify them and also provide clues to the environment in which they formed. In this interactivity, click on each of the bars in the "accordion" to view sedimentary rock features.

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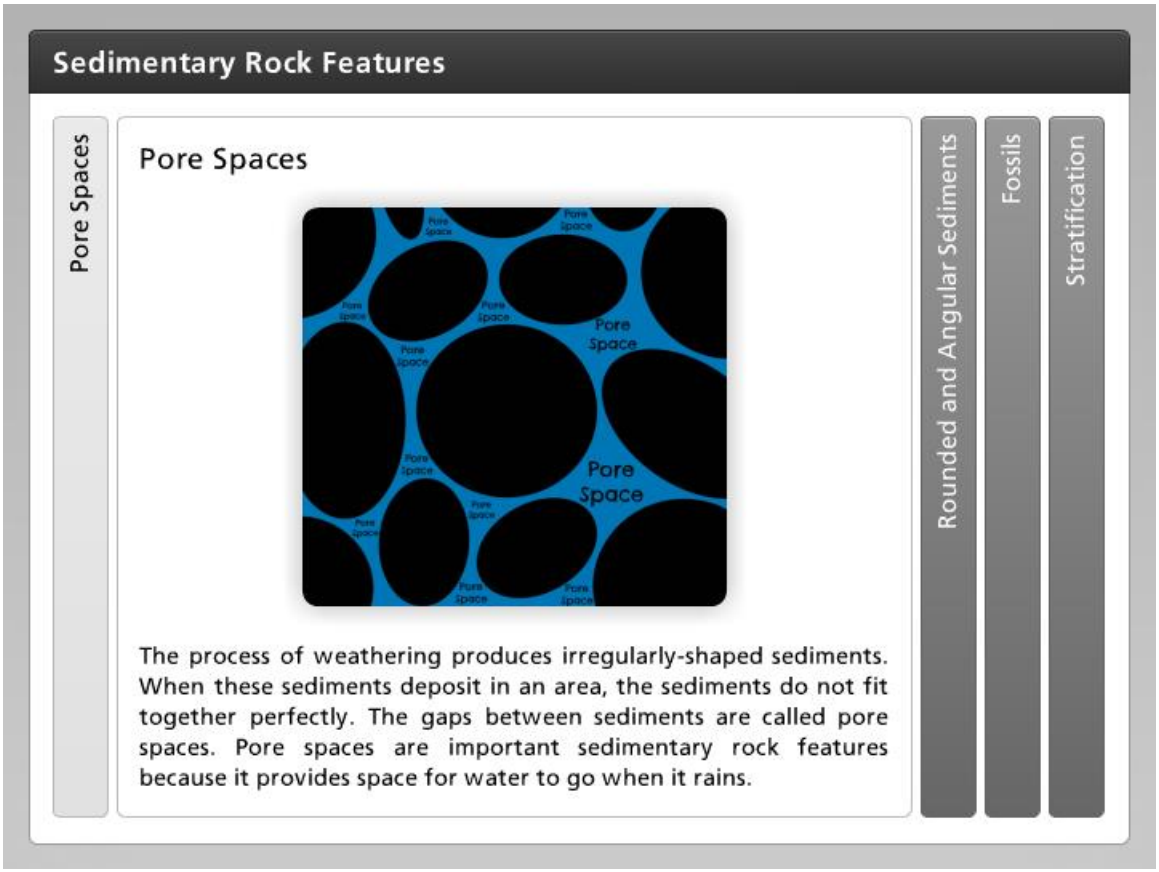
Pore Spaces



The process of weathering produces irregularly-shaped sediments. When these sediments deposit in an area, the sediments do not fit together perfectly. The gaps between sediments are called pore spaces. Pore spaces are important sedimentary rock features because it provides space for water to go when it rains.

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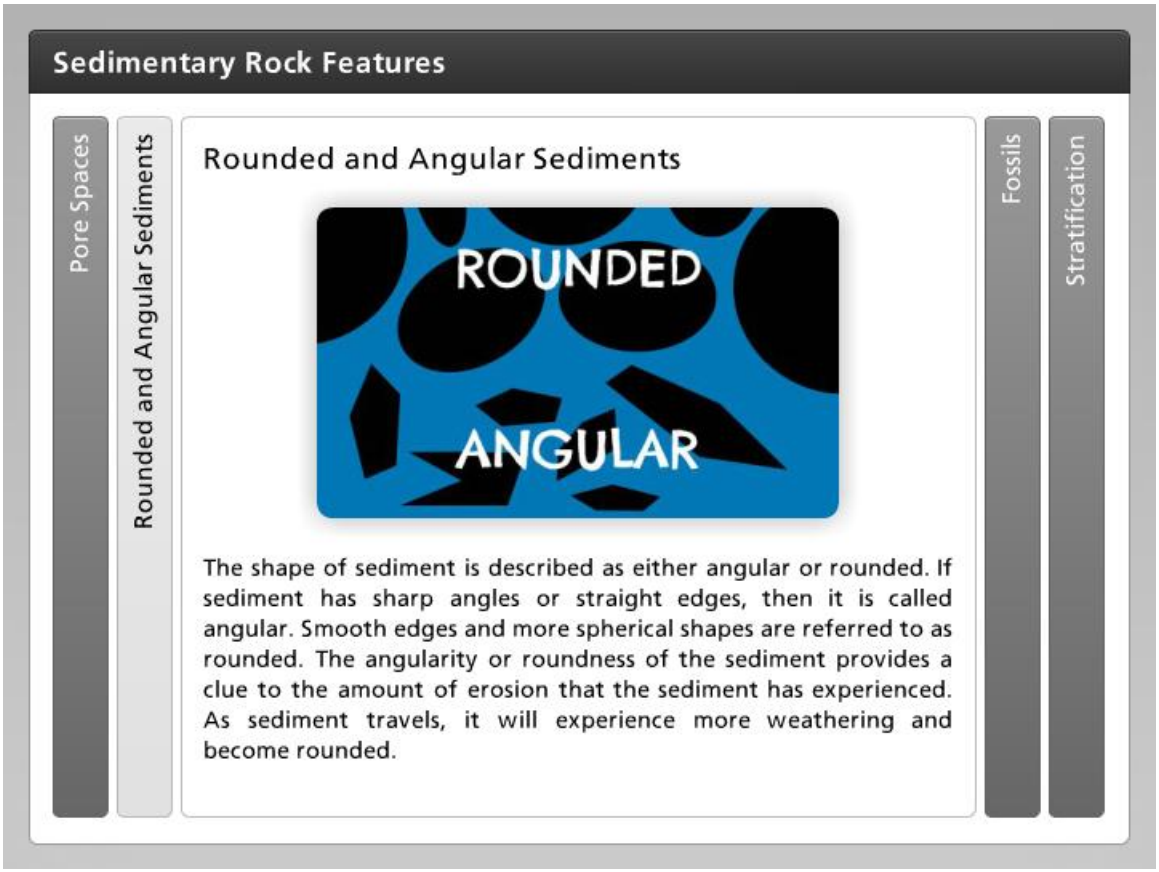
Rounded and Angular Sediments



The shape of sediment is described as either angular or rounded. If sediment has sharp angles or straight edges, then it is called angular. Smooth edges and more spherical shapes are referred to as rounded. The angularity or roundness of the sediment provides a clue to the amount of erosion that the sediment has experienced. As sediment travels, it will experience more weathering and become rounded.

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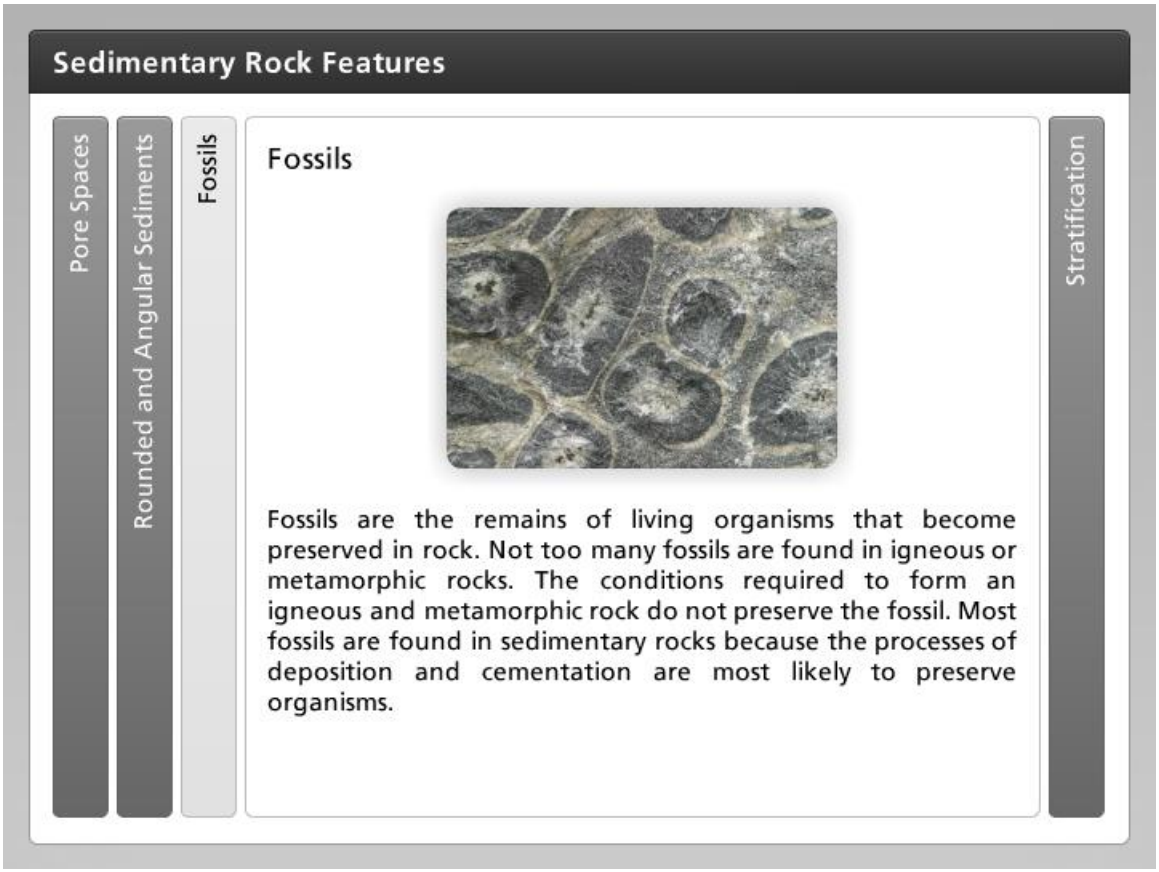
Fossils



Fossils are the remains of living organisms that become preserved in rock. Not too many fossils are found in igneous or metamorphic rocks. The conditions required to form an igneous and metamorphic rock do not preserve the fossil. Most fossils are found in sedimentary rocks because the processes of deposition and cementation are most likely to preserve organisms.

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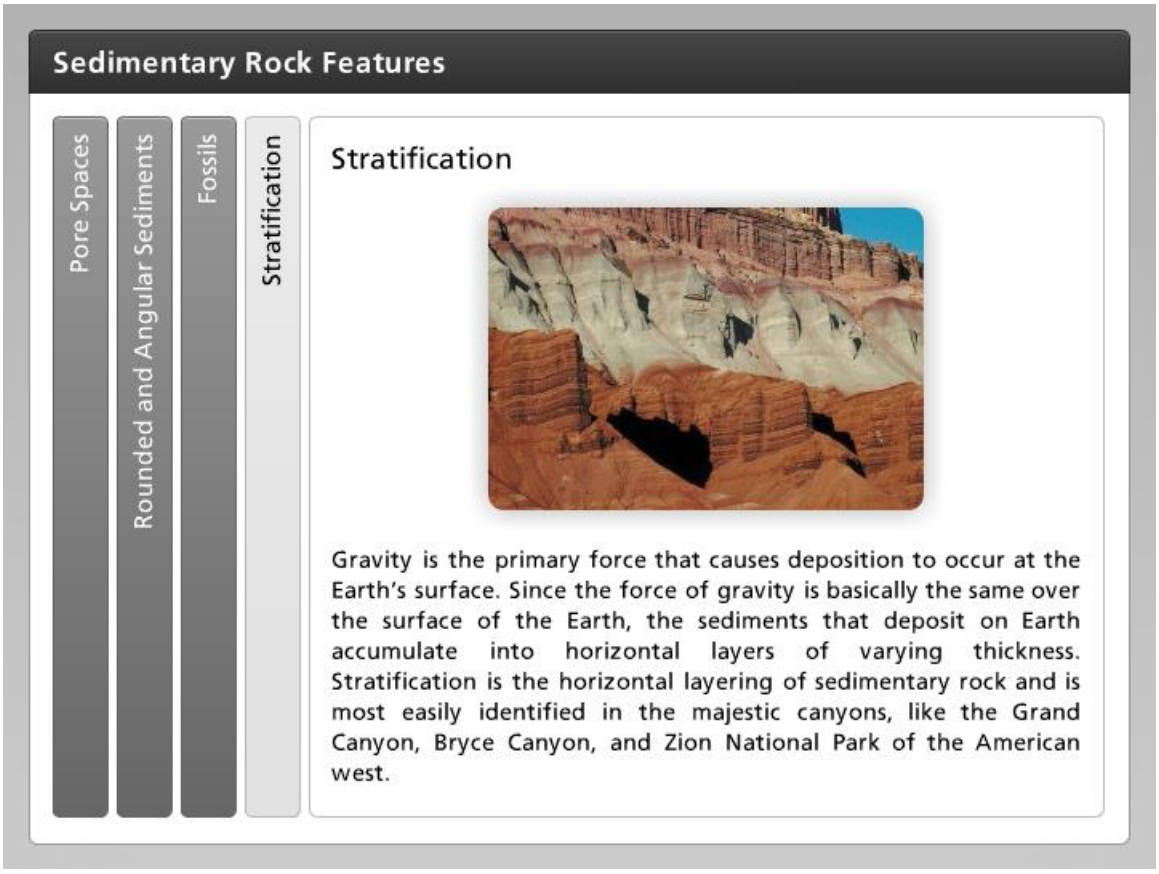
Stratification



Gravity is the primary force that causes deposition to occur at the Earth's surface. Since the force of gravity is basically the same over the surface of the Earth, the sediments that deposit on Earth accumulate into horizontal layers of varying thickness. Stratification is the horizontal layering of sedimentary rock and is most easily identified in the majestic canyons, like the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Park of the American west.