

Lithosphere

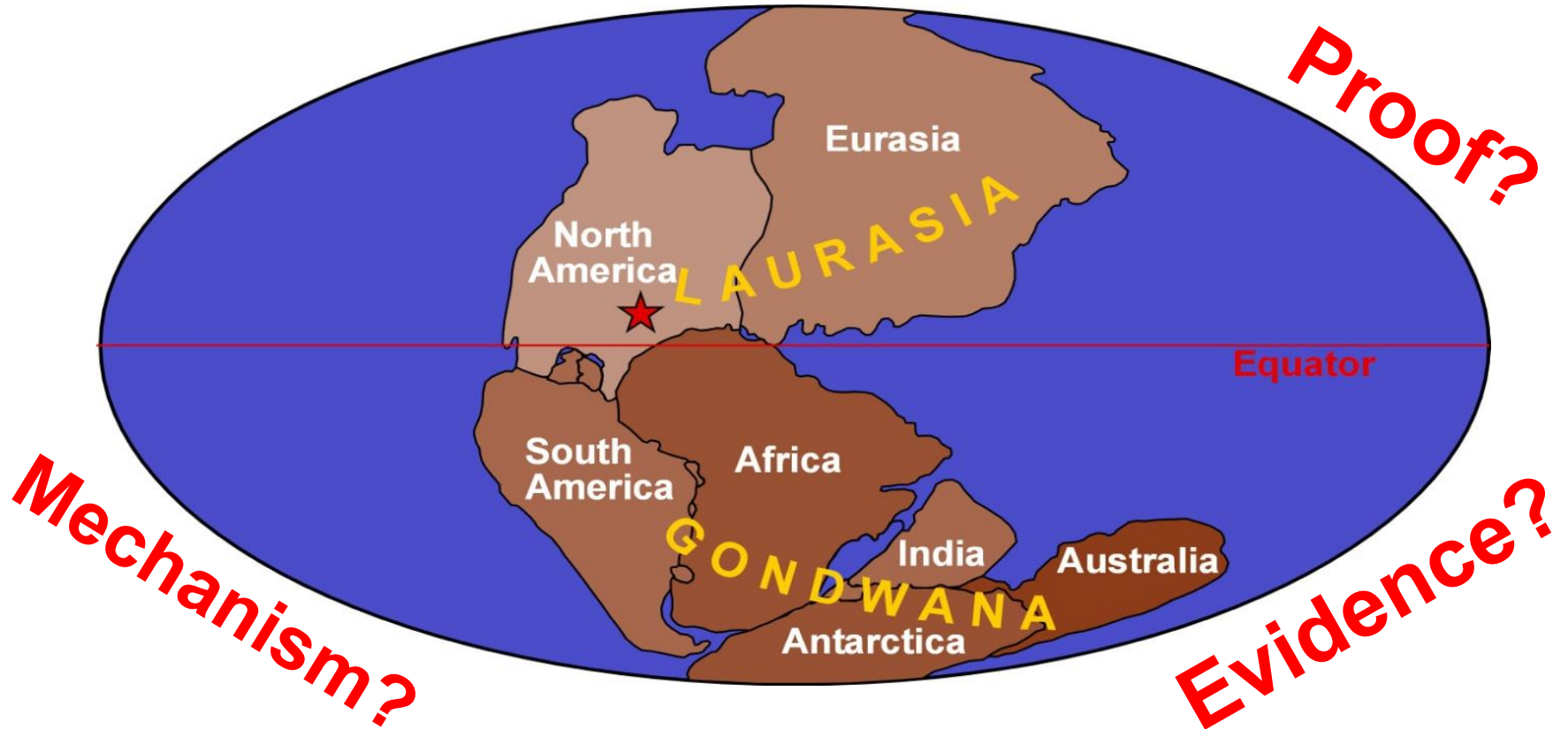
Part 1



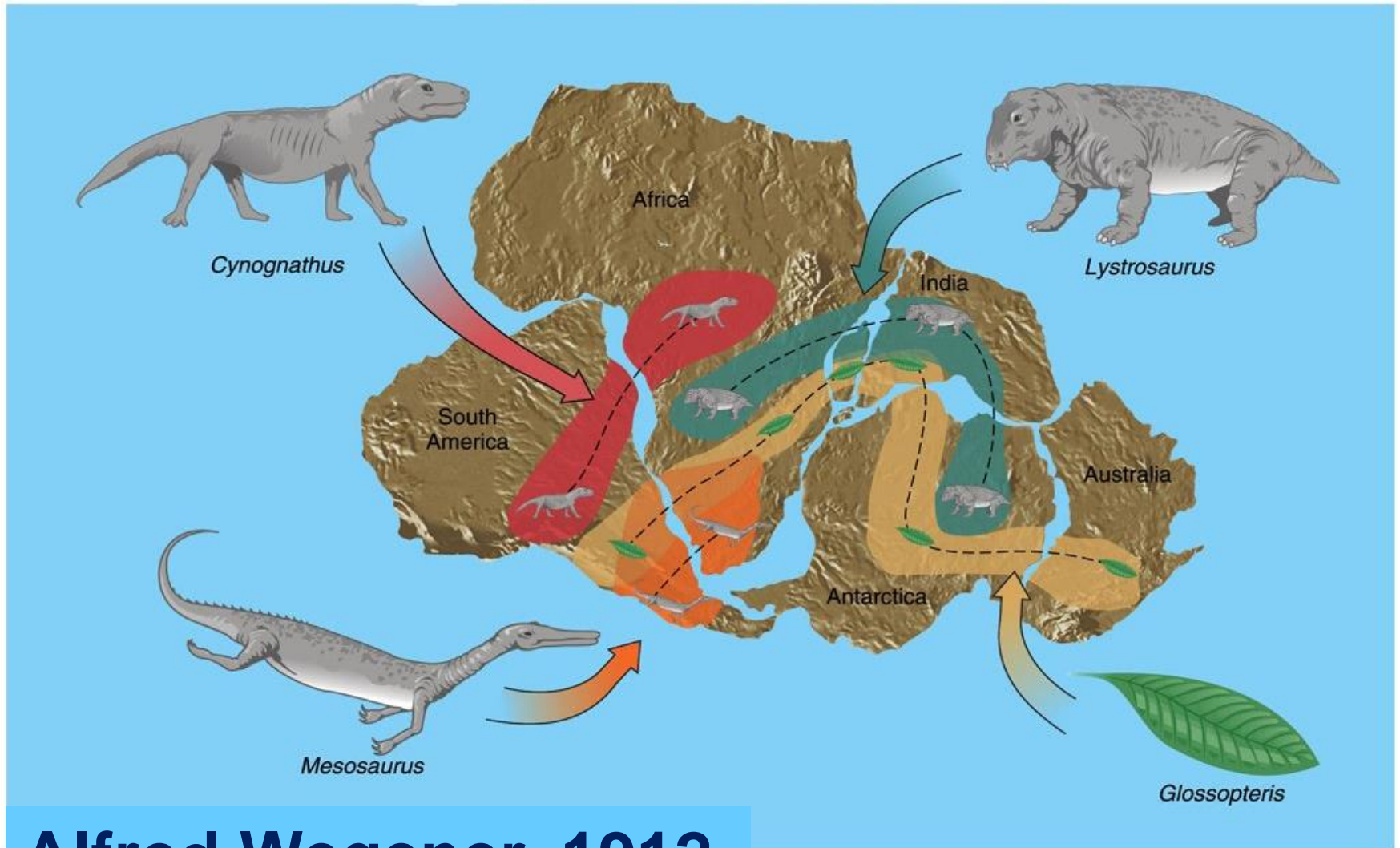
**“Americas... ..were torn away from Europe and Africa” -
Abraham Ortelius, 1596**

Continental Drift

- In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, geologists assumed that the Earth's major features were fixed.
- In 1912, **Alfred Wegener** proposed that up until about 200 million years ago, all of the present continents were joined together into a single super-continent later called **Pangea**.

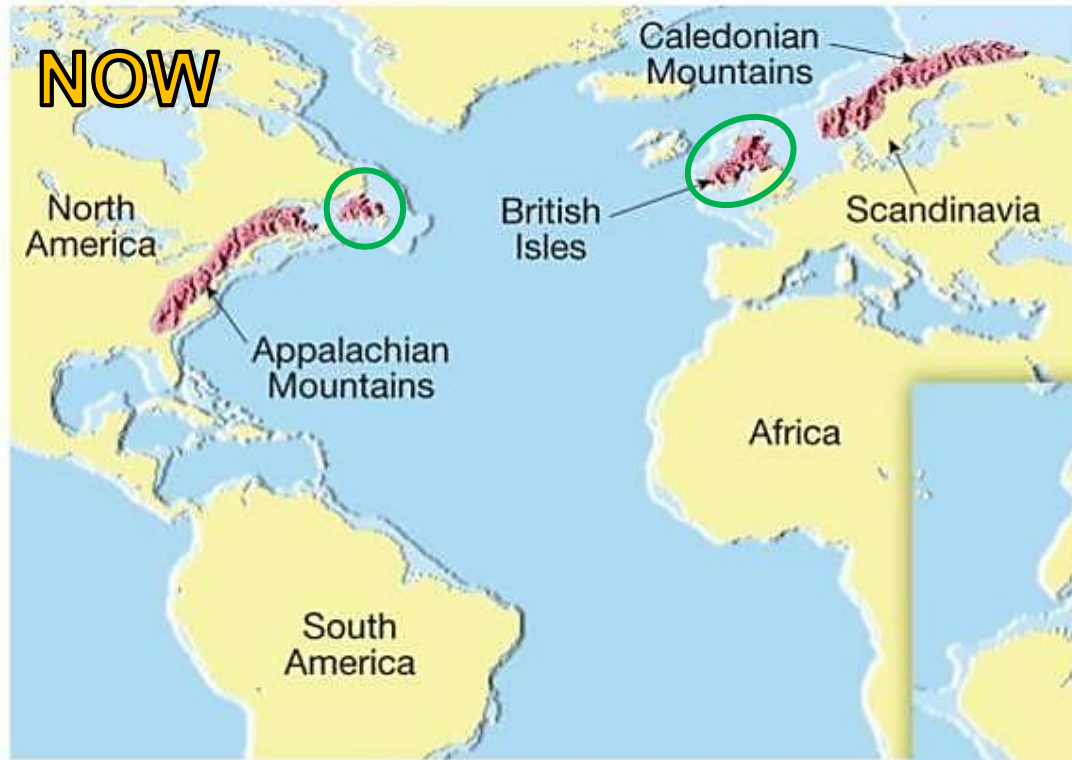


Continental Drift: Fossil Evidence



Alfred Wegener, 1912

Matching Mountain Ranges

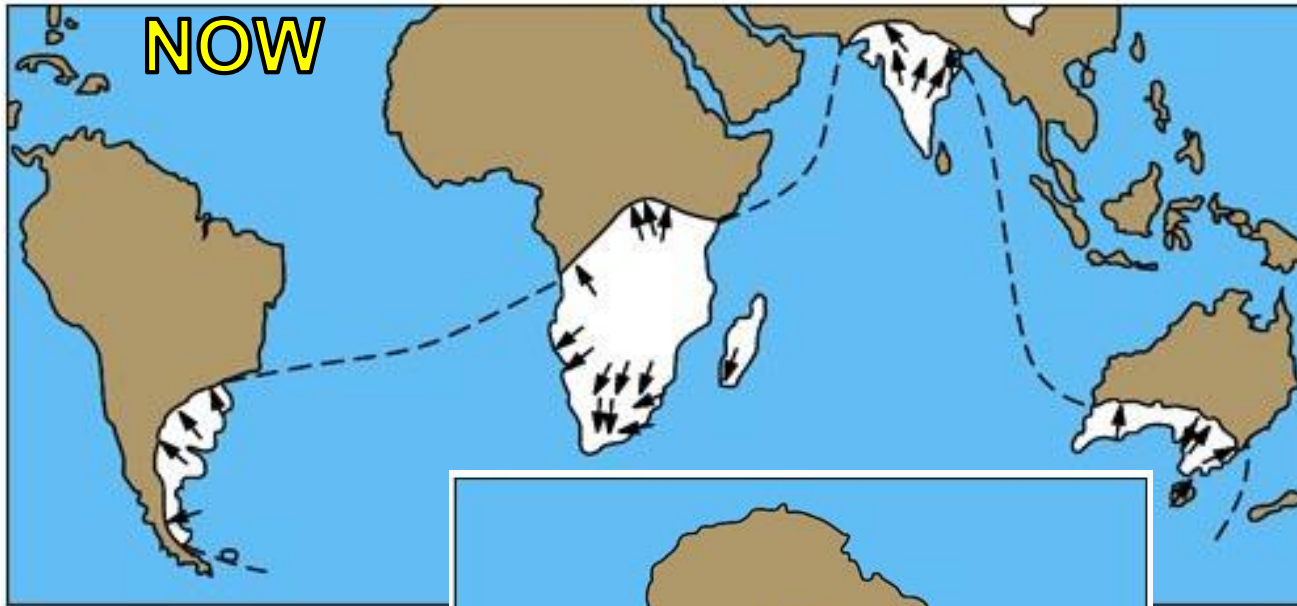


- Parts of **Scotland and Ireland** contain rocks very similar to those found in **Newfoundland and New Brunswick**.

- The **Caledonian Mountains of Europe** and parts of the **Appalachian Mountains of North America** are very similar in structure and composition.

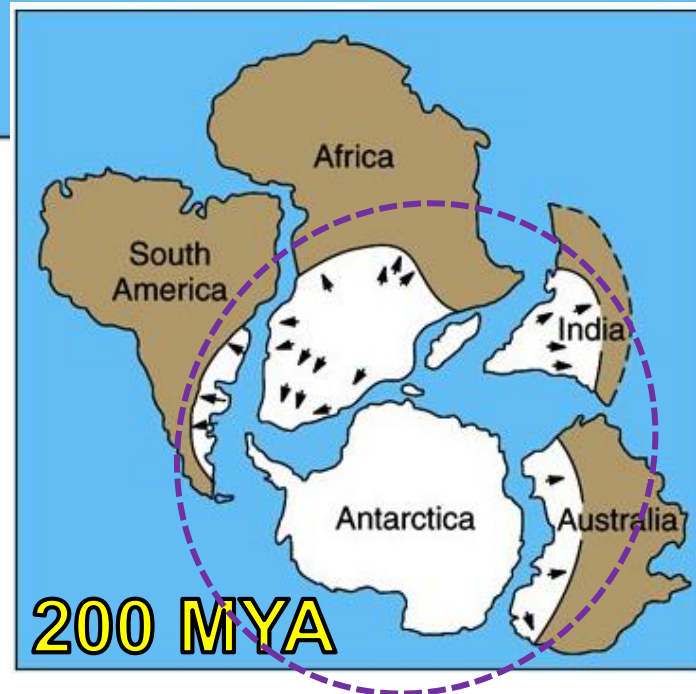


Paleo Glaciation Evidence



- Ancient glacial deposits are found on the southern ends of all Southern Hemisphere continents.

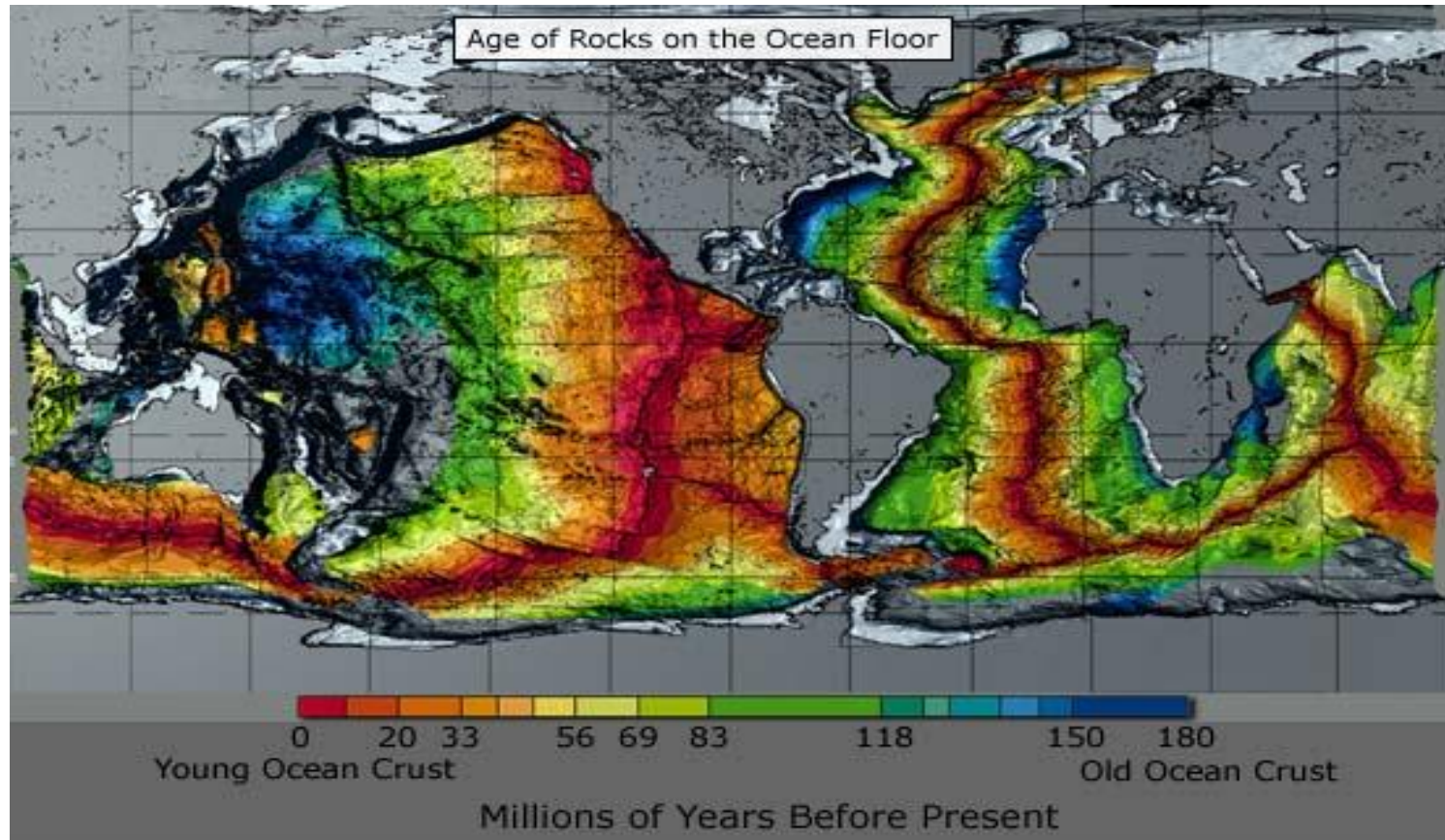
- Glacier retreat “scars” are evident in rocks that are now located in tropical (very warm!) regions.



- This data is consistent with the ice flow of a **single ancient ice cap that once covered a part of Pangea**, similar to the Antarctic ice sheet of our time.

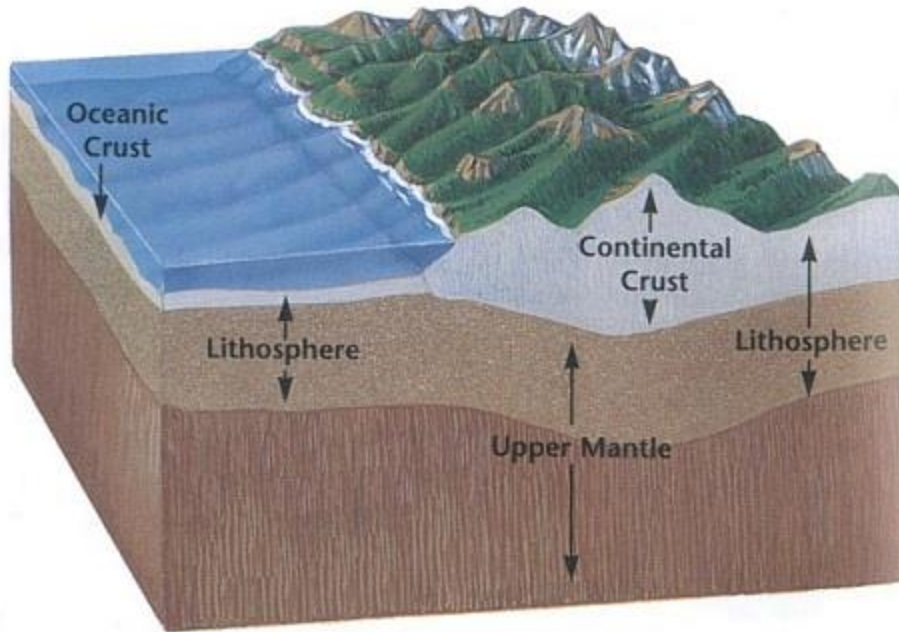
Strong Geophysical Proof

Oceanic crust is seldom more than **200 million years old!**



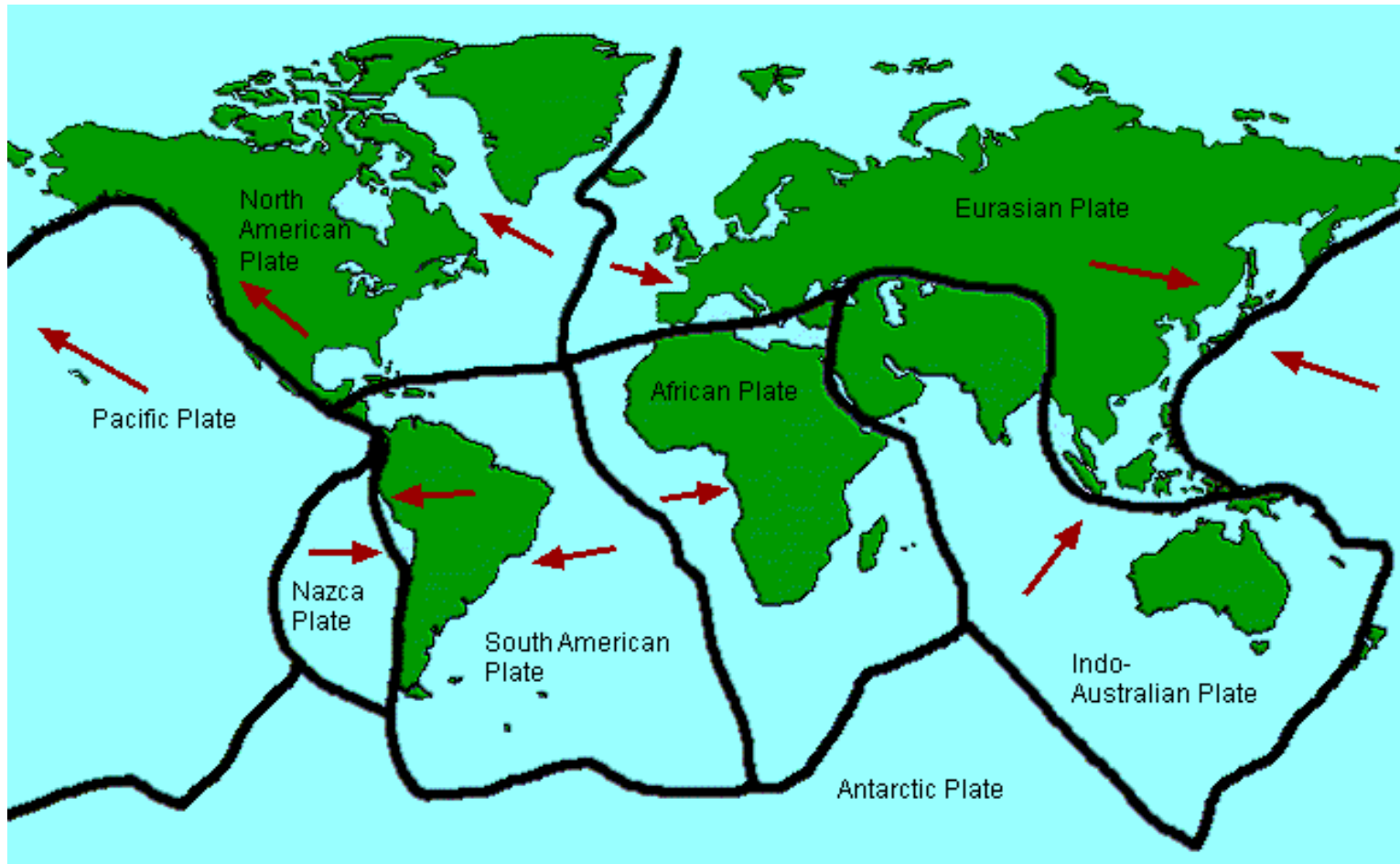
Late 1950s and early 60s data on the **bathymetry of the deep ocean floors** and the nature of the oceanic crust revealed **evidence of seafloor spreading** along the *mid-oceanic ridges*.

Lithosphere: Sphere of Rock



- rigid outer layer
- made of **crust** and the **uppermost** part of the **mantle**
- broken into pieces called **tectonic plates**
- eight major tectonic plates (plus several minor)

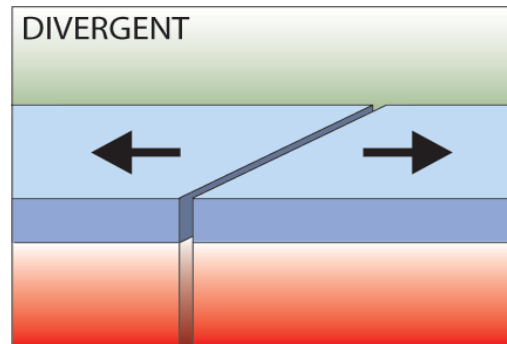
Major Tectonic Plates



All tectonic plates **move** in different directions 1-2 inches per year.

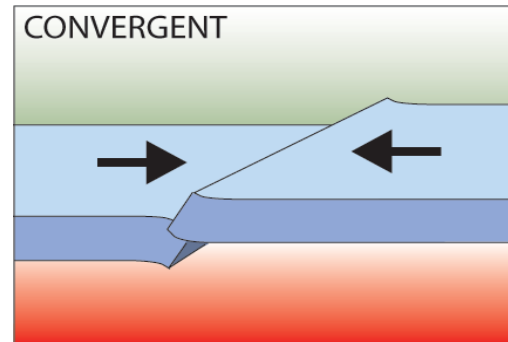
Three types of plate boundary

- **Divergent**



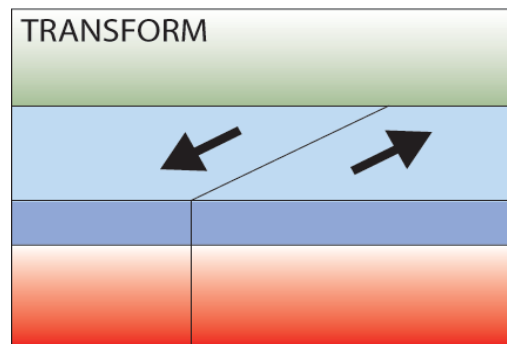
*plates move
AWAY from
each other*

- **Convergent**



*plates move
TOWARDS
each other*

- **Transform**



*plates SLIDE PAST
each other*

How do Plates Move?

- The driving forces of plate motion is **an active subject of on-going research** within geophysics.
- **Leading theory:** plates of lithosphere are moved around by **convection in the underlying hot mantle.**

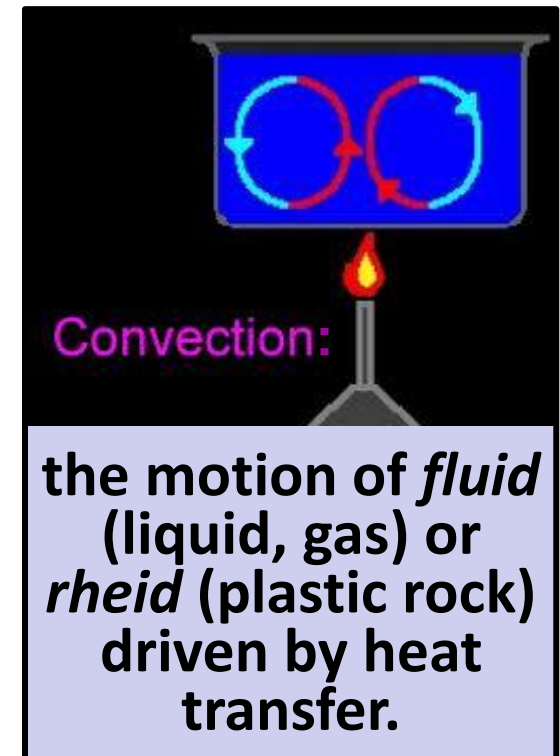
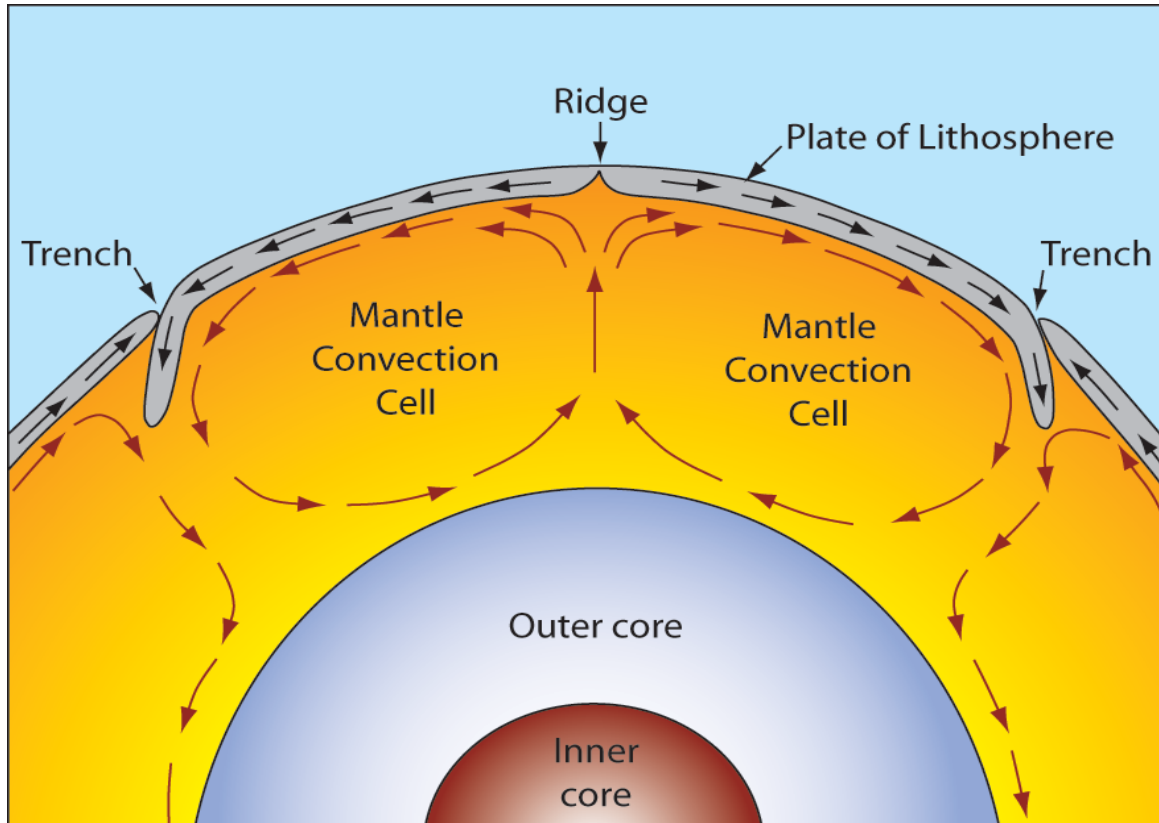
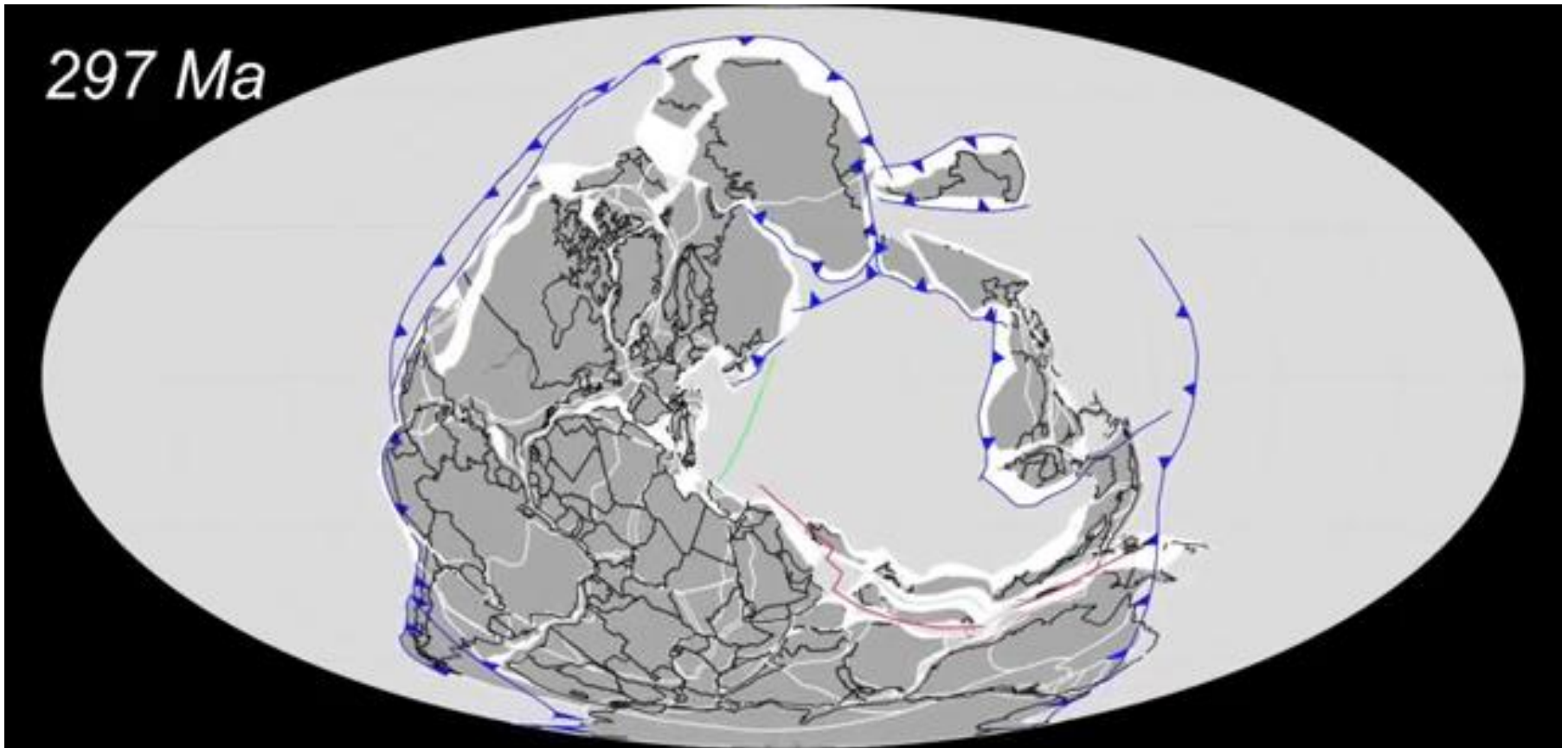


Plate Movement Simulation (past 300 million years)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlnwyAbczog>