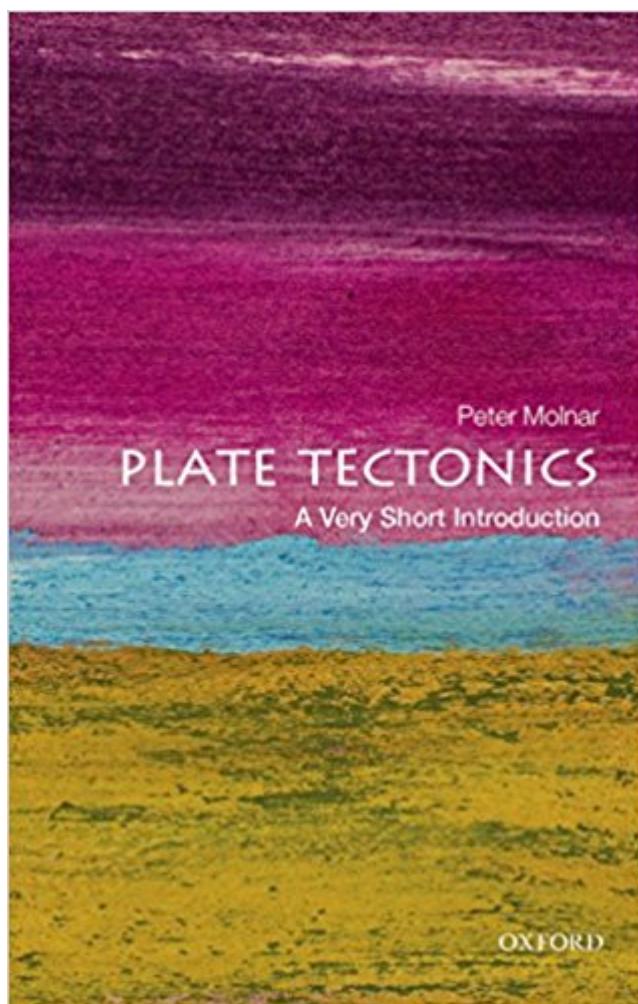


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Plate Tectonics: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

The 1960s revealed a new and revolutionary idea in geological thought: that the continents drift with respect to one another. After having been dismissed for decades as absurd, the concept gradually became part of geology's basic principles. We now know that the Earth's crust and upper mantle consist of a small number of rigid plates that move, and there are significant boundaries between pairs of plates, usually known as earthquake belts. Plate tectonics now explains much of the structure and phenomena we see today: how oceans form, widen, and disappear; why earthquakes and volcanoes are found in distinct zones which follow plate boundaries; how the great mountain ranges of the world were built. The impact of plate tectonics is studied closely as these processes continue: the Himalaya continues to grow, the Atlantic is widening, and new oceans are forming. In this Very Short Introduction Peter Molnar provides a succinct and authoritative account of the nature and mechanisms of plate tectonics and its impact on our understanding of Earth.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Molnar does an excellent job explaining key elements of plate tectonics. His book is understandable even for those with little background in geology or geophysics. Molnar, an expert on mountain building, nicely explains how collisions of plates with continents atop cause mountain belts to form. He also questions the limitations of plate tectonics in explaining formation of such mountains. Understanding Molnar's very short book requires little mathematics. An ideal text for college science courses for non-science majors, and for those who want to understand the evolution of Earth's geological features and phenomena.

There are few who are capable of telling the story of plate tectonics including critical details. Peter Molnar is one of those chosen few who can deliver such a story succinctly and precisely.

This is a very nice, but very short, book on the subject. I learned quite a bit and enough to delve into structural geology and related subjects.

This book is too technical for people who are new to the subject of plate tectonics. In fact, I think it is fair to say that if you can understand this book you don't need to read it but if you need to read it you won't understand it. Books like this have to be leavened with a human dimension in the form of stories about people. This book has such stories but they are very brief and tend to get buried under the technical detail. There are other books in the "A Very Short Introduction" series which give far more accessible introductions to plate tectonics (e.g. "Earth Science: A Very Short Introduction"). I would suggest that anyone who was entirely new to the subject should read one of them instead.

Excellent book! The author has a gift for emphasizing the basic physics in a simple, intuitive way. It's short, which is a plus, because you get a lot of understanding in a short time. I don't think I have read a better introduction to plate tectonics anywhere.

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