

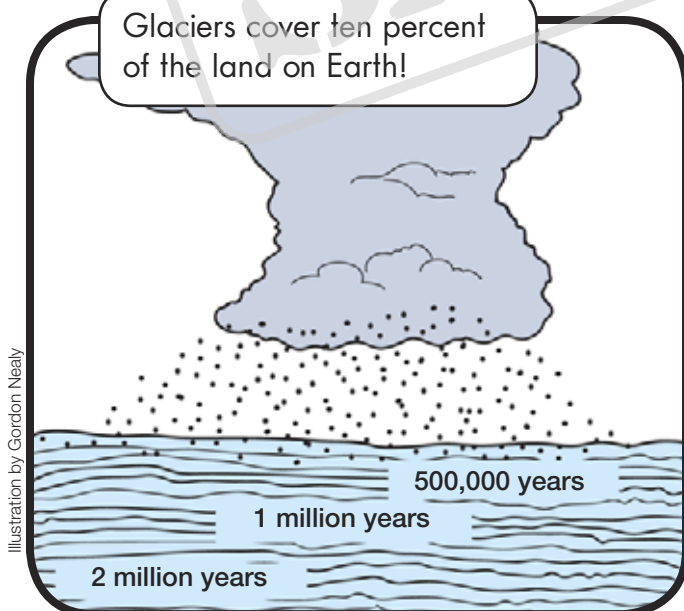
Glaciers are slow-moving masses of ice and snow. They form in places where more snow is falling than melting. These conditions are found high in the mountains, and near the North Pole and South Pole.

There are two common types of glaciers: **alpine** or **valley glaciers** and **continental glaciers**. Alpine glaciers can form in high mountains. Continental glaciers form over large areas of land in the polar regions.

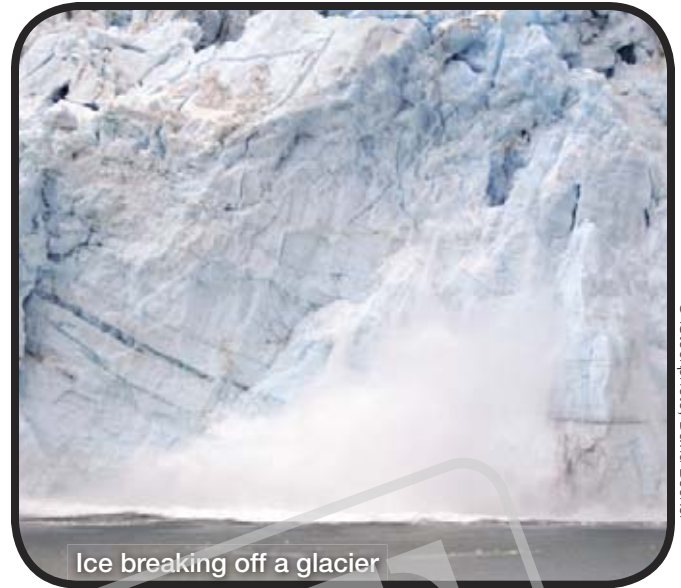
Glaciers form where it is always cold. They need snow to grow larger. It is very cold in Antarctica, but it is also very dry. Little snow falls, so glaciers there grow slowly.

WOWSER!

Glaciers cover ten percent of the land on Earth!



Glaciers are layers of snow built up over many years.



Ice breaking off a glacier

© Stockphoto: David Becker

Glaciers are on the move. Snow piles high on top of a glacier. The weight of the snow puts huge pressure on the glacier. Over time, the heavy snow squeezes the lower layers into ice. As the glacier gets heavier, gravity pulls it down the side of the steep mountain, or outward across the continent.

Glaciers can change the land around them. They act like giant bulldozers. Glaciers carve out valleys and shape mountains. They pick up rocks and dirt. Then they drop them off somewhere else as they move.

✓ Brain Check

- Where do you find glaciers?
- Why do glaciers move?
- How do glaciers affect land?