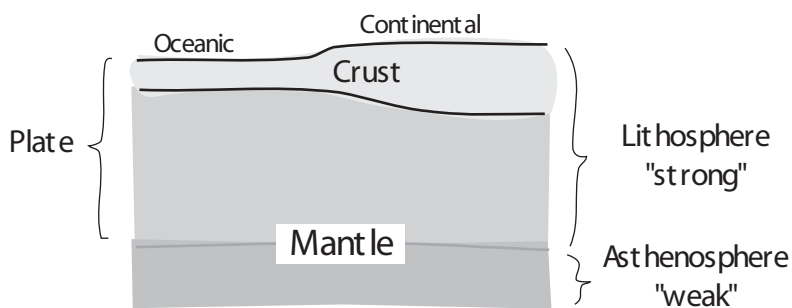
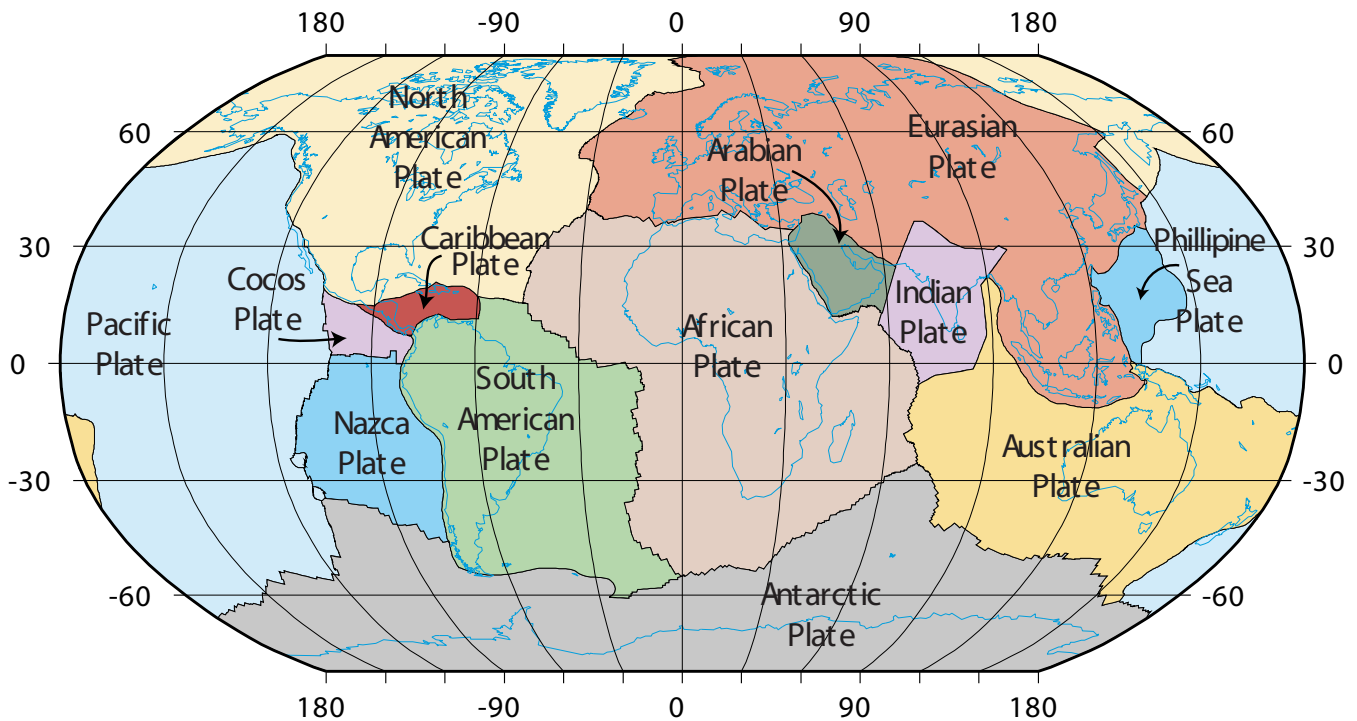


Earth's Plates



Earth is covered with a mosaic of "tectonic plates" that are in constant, relative motion. The movement between these plates gives rise to most earthquakes, and most volcanoes are located along plate margins. Relative velocities between the plates are on the order of a few centimeters per year - about that rate at which human fingernails grow.

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Earth's Plates and Plate Structure

The major plates are identified in the above map. The relative motion of these shell fragments is the cause of most earthquakes.

For more information, visit
http://www.eas.slu.edu/Earthquake_Center

Department of Earth
and Atmospheric
Sciences

Saint Louis University
3507 Laclede Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63103