Chapter 5  Weathering, Soil, and Mass Movements

Section 5.2 Soil
This section describes the characteristics of soil.

Reading Strategy
Comparing and Contrasting  As you read this section, compare the three types of soils by completing the table. For more information on this Reading Strategy, see the Reading and Study Skills in the Skills and Reference Handbook at the end of your textbook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Type</th>
<th>Where It's Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedalfer</td>
<td>a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedocal</td>
<td>b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laterite</td>
<td>c.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics of Soil
Match each description to its term.

- 1. layer of rock and mineral fragments
- 2. part of the regolith that supports growth of plants
- 3. decayed remains of organisms

4. Is the following sentence true or false? Soil has four major components: mineral matter, humus, water, and air. ____________

5. Humus is a source of ____________, and it increases soil’s ability to _____________.

6. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about the functions that soil water serves in the soil.
   a. Soil water provides the moisture needed for chemical reactions that sustain life.
   b. Soil water is the source of carbon dioxide that plants use in photosynthesis.
   c. Soil water provides nutrients in a form that plants can use.
   d. All soils contain the same amount of soil water.

Soil Formation
7. The most important factors in soil formation are ____________, ____________, ____________, and ____________.
The Soil Profile
8. Write a brief description of each soil horizon on the figure below and label each of the soil horizons with the appropriate identifying letter.

Soil Types
9. Write a brief description of each type of soil.
   pedalfer
   pedocal
   laterite

10. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about laterite.
    a. Laterite is not a useful material for making bricks.
    b. Laterite contains almost no organic matter.
    c. Laterite is one of the poorest soils for agriculture.
    d. In a newly cleared field, laterite can support agriculture for only a few years.

Soil Erosion
11. Is the following sentence true or false? Human activities, such as farming, logging, and construction, have slowed down the amount of erosion that occurs today. ________________

12. Is the following sentence true or false? In many regions of the world, soil is eroding faster than it is being formed. ________________