Geology: The Rock Cycle

Geology tells us that there are three different types of rocks that are connected through the rock cycle. They are classified by how they form: **Igneous, Sedimentary, and Metamorphic.**

Let’s dig a little deeper into each type of rock!
**Igneous Rock**

- Forms from the cooling and solidification of magma
- Two types:
  - **Intrusive**, occurs when magma cools quickly
  - **Extrusive**, occurs when magma cools slowly
Examples:
  - **Basalt**, found both on the moon and on the bottom of the ocean
  - **Obsidian**, a glossy black volcanic rock that was used to make weapons and tools
  - **Pumice**, formed from volcanic molten rock spray from volcanoes, lightweight and full of air pockets

**Sedimentary Rock**

Forms from the layering and cementation of sediment and particles
Examples:
  - **Shale**, composed of thin layers, preserves fossils
  - **Limestone**, contains skeletal fragments of marine organisms
  - **Conglomerate**, a collection of pebbles that are cemented together
Metamorphic Rock
Forms when an igneous or sedimentary rock is transformed by extreme heat and pressure
Examples:
- **Gneiss**, contains light and dark bands, used to make stone buildings and flooring
- **Marble**, formed from limestone, used to make countertops
- **Slate**, easily split, made of clay, forms from shale

Check out this interactive rock cycle diagram to learn more about the relationship between the three types of rock:
https://www.learner.org/wp-content/interactive/rockcycle/rockdiagram/

Ready to test your knowledge? Take this fun quiz on the rock cycle from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History:
https://www.oum.ox.ac.uk/thezone/rocks/games/index.htm