

Snake River Canyon and Shoshone Falls



The Snake River Canyon in the Magic Valley region of Southern Idaho runs for over 50 miles in length. Three miles outside of the city of Twin Falls the river flows over a rim 300 meters wide in the “Niagara of the West”, Shoshone Falls. The canyon was formed by a combination of geophysical processes including volcanic activity 8-10 million years ago (the same caldera that resided under Yellowstone now), plate tectonics, more volcanic activity, the Bonneville Flood, and carving by the Snake River. This combination of events creates a rich history to introduce students to the many processes that can shape landscapes over long periods of time. A timeline of events, map of volcanic activity, and geologic data are examples of resources students can use to build an explanation for how these landforms were created.

Additional Resources:

- Magic Valley article [Snake River Canyon Cut Deeper by Cataclysmic Flood](#)
- US Geological Society [History of Snake River Canyon](#)

Performance Standards

2 nd Grade	4 th Grade	Middle School	High School
1-ESS-1.1. Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly.	4-ESS-1.1. Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers for changes in a landscape over time to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.	MS-ESS-2.2. Construct an explanation based on evidence for how geoscience processes have changed Earth's surface at varying time and spatial scales.	HS-ESS-2.1. Develop a model to illustrate how Earth's internal and surface processes operate at different spatial and temporal scales to form continental and ocean-floor features.



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