

# Understanding Earth

By John Grotzinger, Thomas H. Jordan




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For the introductory geology or physical geology course. *Understanding Earth* offers both majors and non-majors rock solid content that originated with the ground-breaking text, *Earth*. In subsequent editions, the text has consistently met the needs of today's students with exceptional content, currency, interactive learning features, and an overall focus of the role of geological science in our lives.

*Understanding Earth* doesn't merely present the concepts and processes of physical geology—the authors focus on how we know what we know. Students actively take part in the scientific process of discovery and learn through experience as they explore the impact of geology on their lives as citizens and future stewards of the planet. The new edition incorporates coverage of recent natural disasters (the 2011 tsunami), fracking and other natural resources issues, the latest developments in climate change, and key events such as the Mars mission and the arrest of geologists in Italy.

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

**John Grotzinger** is a field geologist interested in the evolution of the Earth's surface environments and biosphere. His research addresses the chemical development of the early oceans and atmosphere, the environmental context of early animal evolution, and the geologic factors that regulate sedimentary basins. He has contributed to developing the basic geologic framework of a number of sedimentary basins and orogenic belts in northwestern Canada, northern Siberia, southern Africa, and the western United States. He received his B.S. in geoscience from Hobart College in 1979, an M.S. in geology from the University of Montana in 1981, and a Ph.D. in geology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in 1985. He spent three years as a research scientist at the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory before joining the MIT faculty in 1988. From 1979 to 1990, he was engaged in regional mapping for the Geological Survey of Canada. He currently works as a geologist on the Mars Exploration Rover team, the first mission to conduct ground-based exploration of the bedrock geology of another planet, which has resulted in the discovery of sedimentary rocks formed in aqueous depositional environments. In 1998, Dr. Grotzinger was named the Waldemar Lindgren Distinguished Scholar at MIT, and in 2000 he became the Robert R. Schrock Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences. In 2005, he moved from MIT to Caltech, where he is the Fletcher Jones Professor of Geology. He received the Presidential Young Investigator Award of the National Science Foundation in 1990, the Donath Medal of the Geological Society of America in 1992, and the Henno Martin Medal of the Geological Society of Namibia in 2001. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. **Thomas H. Jordan** is director of the Southern California Earthquake Center, University Professor, and W. M. Keck Foundation Professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Southern California. As SCEC's principal investigator since 2002, he has overseen all aspects of its program in earthquake system science, which currently involves over 600 scientists at more than 60 universities and research institutions worldwide (<http://www.scec.org>). The center's mission is to develop comprehensive understanding of earthquakes and use this scientific knowledge to reduce earthquake risk. Jordan established SCEC's Collaboratory for the Study of Earthquake Predictability and has been the lead SCEC investigator on projects to create and improve a time-dependent, uniform California earthquake rupture forecast. He currently chairs the International Commission on Earthquake Forecasting for Civil Protection (appointed by the Italian government), is a member of the California Earthquake Prediction Evaluation Council, and has served on the Scientific Earthquake Studies Advisory Committee of the U. S. Geological Survey. He was elected to the Council of the U. S. National Academy of Sciences in 2006 and has served on its executive committee. He was appointed to the Governing Board of the National Research Council in 2008. Jordan's research is focused on system-level models of earthquake processes, earthquake forecasting and forecast-evaluation, and full-3D waveform tomography. His other interests include continental formation and tectonic evolution, mantle dynamics, and statistical descriptions of geologic phenomena. He is an author on approximately 190 scientific publications, including two popular textbooks. He chaired the NRC panels that produced two decadal reports, *Living on an Active Earth: Perspectives on Earthquake Science* (2003) and *Basic Research Opportunities in Earth Sciences* (2002). Jordan received his B.A., M.S., and Ph.D. (1972) from the California Institute of Technology. He taught at Princeton University and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography before joining the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as the Robert R. Shrock Professor in 1984. He served as the head of MIT's Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences for the decade 1988-1998. In 2000, he moved from MIT to USC, and in 2004, he was appointed as a USC University Professor. He has been awarded the Macelwane and Lehmann Medals of the American Geophysical Union and the Woollard Award of the Geological Society of America. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences,

the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society.

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