

Name _____



Could You Walk Through Time by Hiking Through a Canyon?

Have you ever gone hiking in a canyon and wondered what secrets the rocks hold? Canyons aren't just beautiful—they're like nature's history books. When you walk through a canyon, you're not just taking a hike. You're also walking through millions of years of Earth's history.

Canyons are deep valleys with steep sides, often carved by rivers over a very long time. The Grand Canyon in the United States is one of the most famous examples. As rivers cut down into the Earth, they expose rock layers that have been buried for ages.

Each layer of rock tells a story. The top layers are younger, and the lower you go, the older the rocks get. Some rocks at the bottom of the Grand Canyon are over a billion years old! That means when you hike to the bottom, you're looking at rocks from a time long before dinosaurs roamed the Earth.

These layers can show what the Earth was like in the past. Some may contain fossils of sea creatures, proving that the area was once underwater. Other layers might be made of sand that once blew across ancient deserts. By studying the rocks, scientists can learn about past climates, plants, and animals.

Geologists, the scientists who study rocks, often explore canyons to learn more about Earth's history. The colors, shapes, and patterns in the rocks help them figure out how the land has changed. Erosion from wind, rain, and rivers slowly shapes the canyon over time.

So yes, walking through a canyon really is like walking through time. Each step takes you deeper into the past. The next time you're on a hike and see layers of rock on a cliff, remember—you're looking at ancient stories written in stone!