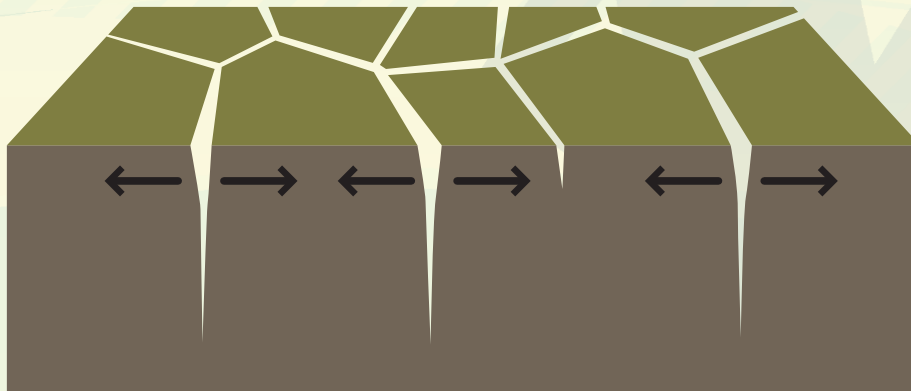


Notes for Teachers – The Giant's Causeway



The Giant's Causeway is a wonderful natural feature of the coastline in Northern Ireland. It was formed millions of years ago, when a volcanic fissure opened and covered the Antrim Plateau with sheets of molten lava.

As the lava cooled, it also started to shrink very slightly causing deep joints (cracks) to appear, creating polygonal blocks of basalt. Since the blocks looked regular and fitted together so well, people assumed that they had been put there by human beings, or by a giant.



In the Tale of Finn McCool, the giant builds the Causeway but is then saved from his gigantic enemy by his cunning wife. In one version, Oonagh even gives Benandonner one of her baby's biscuits, but with an iron plate baked inside it. When the giant tries to bite the biscuit he hurts his teeth; proof that Finn's baby must be much stronger than Benandonner.

Traditional stories, myths and legends, Aesop's fables – they are all used to explain natural features in cultures around the world. In Greek culture, Prometheus brought fire as a gift for mankind. In Native American beliefs, the coyote brought the gift of fire. In Inuit culture, the crow brings daylight to the world.

Pupils are invited to write their own folklore tale to explain something from the world around them. Examples might include the Eurotunnel, Stonehenge, the London Eye or the Angel of the North.

Encourage your pupils to do some research either from books or the internet. As a bonus, your pupils can go into their local First Choice store and request more information to complete the activity sheets. Your First Choice store will have some fact sheets and any brochures available on the various destinations for your pupils to cut out pictures if need be. If your pupils go into the stores with their families they can expect to walk away with an Eco-Traveller certificate just for asking for more information.