

Name: _____

Date: _____ Period: _____

Plate Tectonics

The Physical Setting: Earth Science

Lab Activity: Continental Drift

INTRODUCTION:

Since the early 19th Century, people have thought about the jigsaw fit of the continents. South America and Africa appear as though they could fit together.

Geologists have collected data that indicate that the continents are on separate “plates” of Earth’s crust. Direct measurements of the relative motions of the continents have now shown that these semi-rigid plates are able to move toward or away from each other. They may also rotate. These motions are often associated with new crust or they may force one plate to be consumed under another.

OBJECTIVE:

You will see how the continents appeared to fit together and how the outline of the continents supports the Theory of Continental Drift.

VOCABULARY:

Continental Drift -

Pangaea -

Mesosaurus -








PROCEDURE:

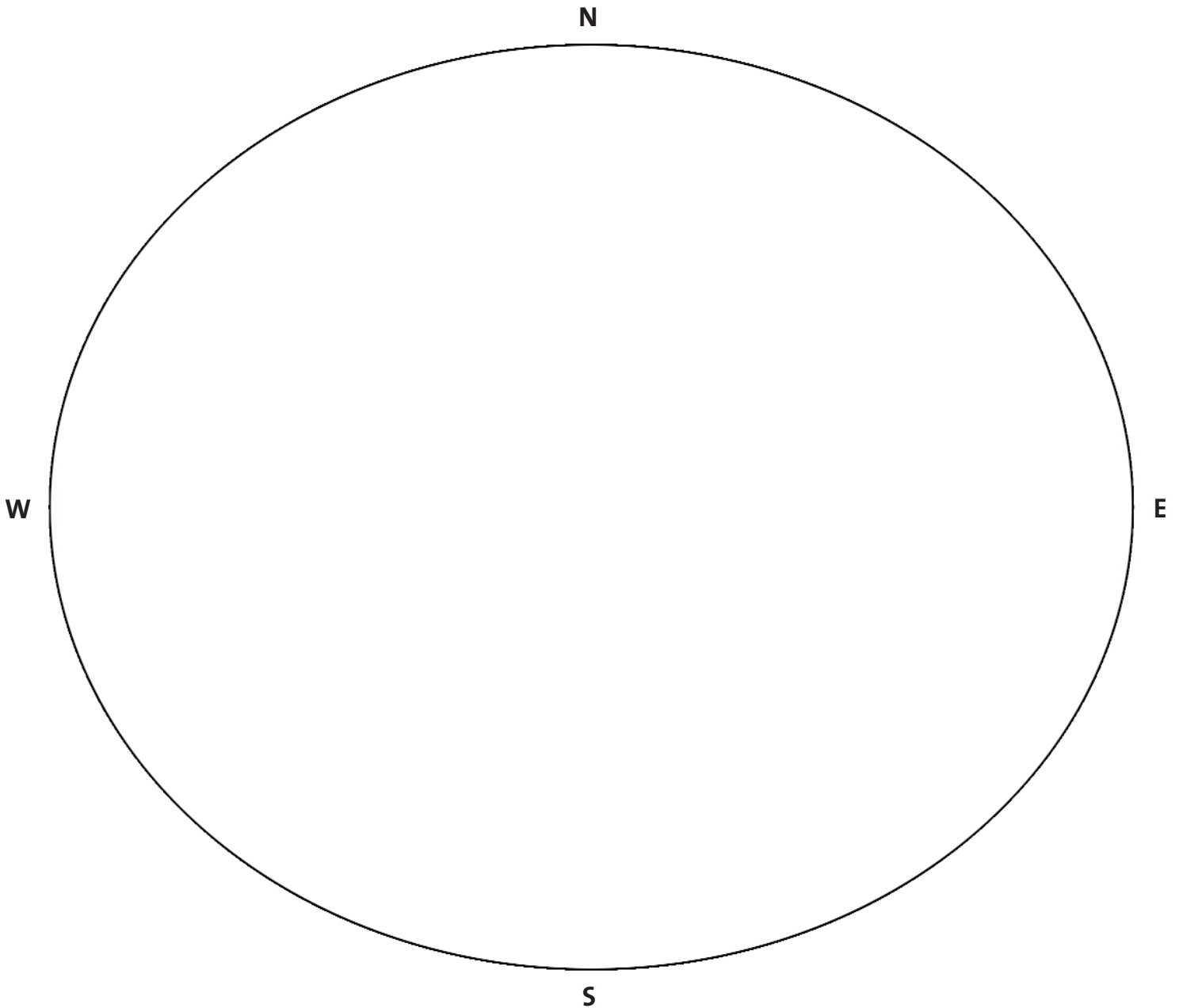
1. On the “Cut-out Page” cut out the continents.
2. On the report sheet, fit the continents together to form one large landmass. Use the legend to match up similar counterparts on the other continents.
3. Glue or tape the continents down to your report sheet.



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KEY

① Europe & Asia	④ Africa	⑦ Australia	〰〰〰 basalt	 Plateosaurus
② North America	⑤ India	 Below Sea Level	 desert	 Rhynchosaur
③ South America	⑥ Antarctica	 Above Sea Level	 amphibians	 Mesosaurus



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to your lab, what was the inferred motion of North America relative to Africa that occurred over the past 200 million years?
2. How has the climate of northeastern United States changed over the past 200 million years?
3. Where in the United States is there measurable evidence that the continents are moving?
4. What could explain the existence of coal deposits in Antarctica?
5. Back in 1915, who was responsible for developing the Theory of Continental Drift?

CONCLUSION: What evidence is there that the present-day continents were once a single landmass?

Cut-out Page

