

Why Landscapes Differ

Why Landscapes are Different

There are a number of things which affect and change landscapes. The first of these is:-

1. **Soil type**. Soil is formed when rock and/or plant and animal waste collects on the surface of the land. If rocks are hard then little soil collects but if it is soft the rock easily breaks down and soil collects in quantity. Similarly dead and decaying quantities of plant material collect on the surface and these improve the soil quality. If there are few plants decaying then the soil is of poor quality.

2. **Climate**..... Climate is one of the most important factors affecting the formation of soil. Warmer temperatures and an abundance of water (usually rainfall) have a tendency to speed up the formation of soil, in some cases rather dramatically. Whereas cooler temperatures and less precipitation slow down soil formation.



This is a picture of a landscape found in the Highlands of Scotland. Here the soil is poor for a number of reasons. **a)** the rocks beneath the surface are hard and don't break up easily. (granites) **b)** temperatures throughout the year tend to be colder than elsewhere **c)** there is little vegetation which can decay to make soil and **d)** there is a lot of rain so the ground is permanently wet which tends to drown many types of plants. **e)** what soil there is, tends to be very shallow and high plants growing there are blown over by high winds because their roots cannot dig into the hard rock

This photograph shows a landscape in Central England. There are large tracts (areas) of farm land and lots of trees. Many of the trees found in the hedgerows have grown there naturally while in other areas groups of trees have been planted by man (copses). **a)** Here the soil is in good condition as the underlying rocks are soft (sandstones) **b)** over many years plants have grown and the decaying remains have improved the soil **c)** the soil is drier and the climate warmer **d)** farmers have treated the soil with fertilisers and manure

