

THE ROCK CYCLE



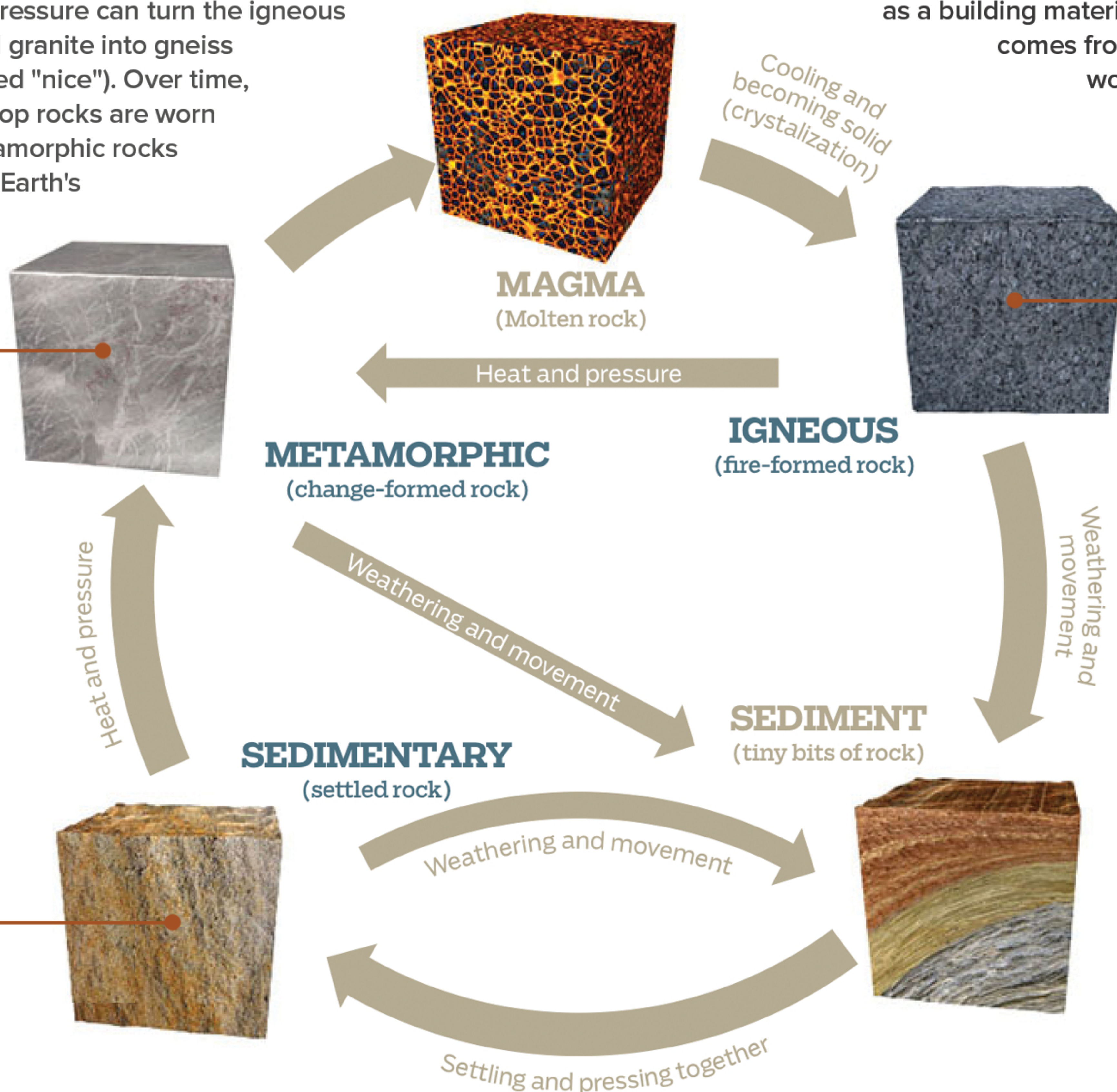
Rocks are continually changing form. All rocks fall into one of three categories, depending on how they were formed. **Igneous** rocks include obsidian, basalt, and granite. **Sedimentary** rocks include sandstone, limestone, and breccia. **Metamorphic** rocks include marble, slate, and quartzite.

Metamorphic Rocks

These rocks get their name from the Greek meta and morph meaning "change of form." They begin as igneous, sedimentary, or even other metamorphic rocks and then go through a metamorphosis, or change. For instance, rocks that are deep within Earth have pressure exerted on them from rocks above. The high heat and pressure can turn the igneous rock called granite into gneiss (pronounced "nice"). Over time, when the top rocks are worn away, metamorphic rocks appear on Earth's surface.

Igneous Rocks

These start out as melted rock, called magma, deep inside Earth's crust and mantle. When the magma erupts on Earth's surface, it is called lava. When the magma or lava cools and hardens, it becomes igneous rock. The best-known igneous rock is granite, which is used as a building material. Igneous comes from the Latin word for "fire."



Sedimentary Rocks

Wind and water are constantly changing rocks chemically, breaking them down, and then transporting tiny bits of rocks and minerals elsewhere. These small bits of rock, called sediment, may be carried to riverbeds, deserts, and ocean floors. The layers of sediment are lithified (compacted), forming new rocks, called sedimentary rocks. Sandstone is one of the best-known sedimentary rocks.