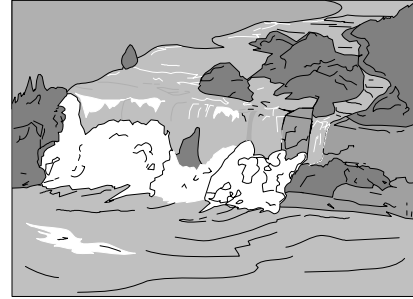


Running Water

Materials

A large shallow pan
Books or blocks
A sprinkling can
Sand or soil



Procedure

1. Pack the dirt about half full into the pan, leaving some empty space on one end.
2. Set the pan up on the books or blocks so that it is tilted about 45 degrees (half way between flat and straight up). Make sure the dirt is flat and featureless. The empty space should be at the bottom.
3. Slowly sprinkle the water onto the top of the dirt, allowing it to trickle down and create a landscape in the soil.
4. Repeat the sprinkling if you like. Notice how the water erodes the soil and creates valleys and riverbeds.
5. As an optional activity, try the experiment tilting the pan at a greater and then at a lesser angle. Does this change the degree to which the running water changes the landscape?

Moving water is one of the main shapers of the earth. Even the Grand Canyon is said to have been carved by the power of running water. Loose soil is the easiest to be molded, but even rock and mineral slopes are eroded by water. The dislodged particles get transferred to new places, building up a delta at a river's mouth, or just adding to the ocean floor. Mountains dissemble into boulders, which become rocks, which are worn down into pebbles, which eventually break down into sand particles. What a powerful transformational process!

