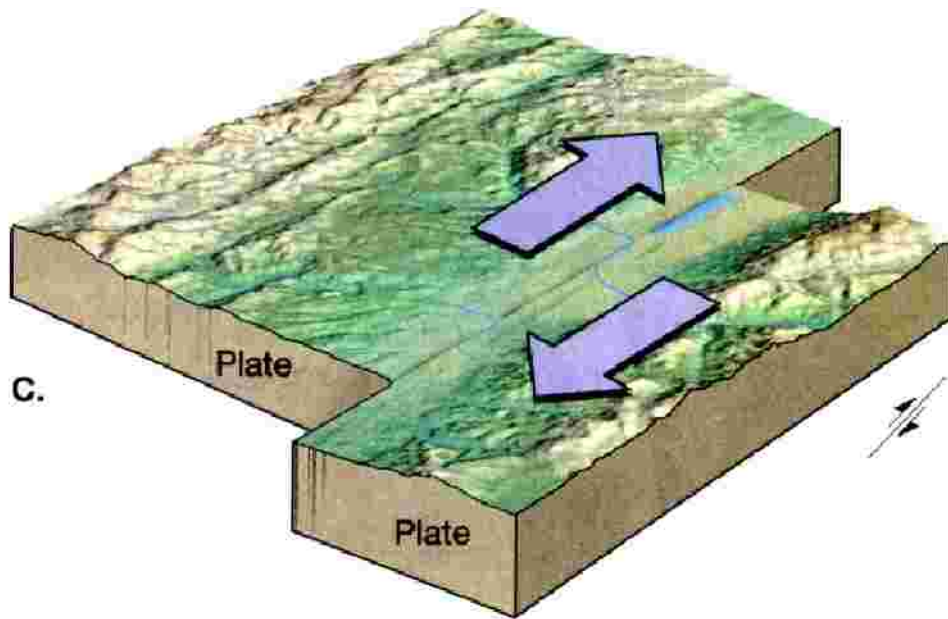


Transform Boundary



Transform Boundaries

Places where plates slide past each other are called transform boundaries. Plates on either side of a transform boundary slide past each other. They do not crash into or tear away from each other. Usually transform boundaries lack the impressive features found at convergent and divergent boundaries.

Instead, transform boundaries are marked in some places by straight valleys along the boundary where rock has been ground up by the sliding. In other places, transform boundaries are marked by features that have been split in half and the two halves have moved in opposite directions.



Perhaps the most famous transform boundary in the world is the San Andreas fault. The part of California to the west of the fault is slowly moving north relative to the rest of California. Since motion along the fault is sideways and not vertical, Los Angeles will not crack off and fall into the ocean as popularly thought, but it will simply creep towards San Francisco at about 6 centimeters per year. In about ten million years, the two cities will be side by side!



Although transform boundaries do not have the spectacular surface features, their sliding motion causes **lots** of earthquakes. The strongest and most famous earthquake along the San Andreas fault hit San Francisco in 1906. Many buildings were shaken to pieces by the quake, and much of the rest of the city was destroyed by the fires that followed. More than 600 people died as a result of the quake and fires. Recent large quakes along the San Andreas include the Imperial Valley quake in 1940. And the Loma Prieta quake in 1989 which happened during the world series being played in nearby Sanfransico.