How the Grand Canyon Was Made

Read the passage. Then answer the questions in full sentences.

Name _____ Date _____

The Grand Canyon in Arizona was made in four steps. An easy way to remember them is the word DUDE: deposition, uplift, down cutting and erosion.

First came deposition. The oldest rocks at the bottom formed almost two billion years ago. Layer after layer of rock was laid on top of them, so the oldest layers are at the bottom and the youngest at the top.

Next came uplift. Between 70 and 30 million years ago, the whole region was pushed up, high and flat. The top layer formed at the bottom of an ocean, but today it sits as high as 9,000 feet.

About five to six million years ago, the Colorado River began cutting down into the rock. In floods, the rocks it carries chip at the riverbed like chisels. Smaller streams wore the sides away, and the canyon is still slowly growing deeper and wider.

1. **What do the letters in DUDE stand for?**

2. **Where did the top layer of rock form?**

3. **How does the Colorado River cut into the rock during floods?**

4. **Why do you think the oldest rocks are at the bottom of the canyon?**

Answer key

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1. What do the letters in DUDE stand for?
   Deposition, uplift, down cutting and erosion.

2. Where did the top layer of rock form?
   At the bottom of an ocean.

3. How does the Colorado River cut into the rock during floods?
   The rocks it carries chip at the riverbed like chisels.

4. Why do you think the oldest rocks are at the bottom of the canyon?
   Sample answer: they were made first, and each new layer was laid on top of the one before.