



Great Rift Valley

Located mostly in Africa, the Great Rift Valley is a 3,000-mile-long gash in the Earth's surface. It extends from Mozambique in the south, cuts through the East African plateau, and continues through Ethiopia before becoming the Red Sea. Once in the Middle East, the crack forms the Dead Sea and Jordan River Valley. It extends from 1,300 feet below sea level in the Middle East to over 6,000 feet above sea level in Kenya. The Great Rift Valley was formed from geological upheavals in prehistoric times that created other faults in the Earth's surface. In Africa, the Great Rift Valley varies from 30 to 50 miles wide and from 1,000 to 3,000 feet deep. Archaeologists have found many early human bones and fossils in the Great Rift Valley. It has been the major north-south avenue for the migration of people throughout history. The Great Rift Valley, however, acted as a barrier to east-west movement. Many of Africa's long, narrow lakes such as Lake Malawi, Lake Albert, Lake Tanganyika, and Lake Nyasa are located in the Great Rift Valley.

ART: Question 1

In what part of Africa is the Great Rift Valley located?

Question 2

Does the Great Rift Valley extend from north to south or east to west?

Question 3

Why are many major lakes in Africa located in the Great Rift Valley?