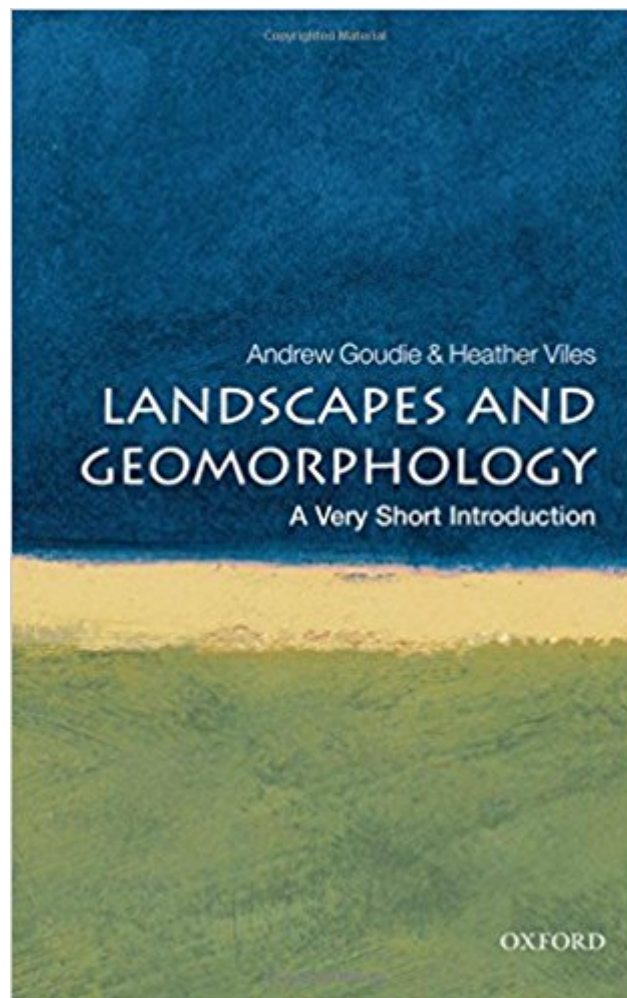




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Landscapes And Geomorphology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)



Synopsis

Landscapes are all around us, but most of us know very little about how they have developed, what goes on in them, and how they react to changing climates, tectonics, and human activities.

Examining what landscape is, and how we use a range of ideas and techniques to study it, Andrew Goudie and Heather Viles demonstrate how scientists have built on classic methods--pioneered by the great researchers of the nineteenth century--to shed new light on our planet. Using examples from around the world, including New Zealand, the Tibetan Plateau, and the deserts of the Middle East, they examine some of the key controls on landscape today such as tectonics and climate, as well as humans and the living world. They also discuss some major "landscape detectives" from the past, including Charles Darwin, who did some important, but often overlooked, research on landscape. Concluding with the cultural importance of landscape, and exploring how this has led to the conservation of much "earth heritage," they delve into the future and look at how we can predict the response of landscapes to the projected climate change.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Andrew Goudie is a Professor of Geography and Master of St. Cross College, Oxford University.

Heather Viles is Professor of Biogeomorphology and Heritage Conservation at Oxford University.

The Very Short Introduction series lives up to its name. Compiling an entire field into just 125 pages

is no small task, so the information presented here is often far too generalized. Terms and phrases show up and disappear without any solid explanation, which seems to suggest the reader should have some prior knowledge of basic physical geography--it certainly couldn't hurt--and because of how many topics are briefly covered in such a small space, it'll probably be difficult to remember much of what you can learn from the slim book. (The Very Short Introduction series is published by the University of Oxford, and because of that has a somewhat irritating focus on the UK--irritating to me, at least.) Topics covered include:-Geologic time and its influence on geomorphology.-History of geomorphology and geology and the advancement of theory up until plate tectonics.-Changes and formation of various important geomorphological features, e.g., atolls, glacial moraines, the Tibetan Plateau, fluvial systems, soil erosion, thaw lakes, the Storegga Slide, and many, many more.-A focus on the pleistocene and holocene epochs.-Methods and tools used to study geomorphology (somewhat confusingly covered--there's so much!): DGPS, LIDAR, SRI, various dating methods, SRTM, bathymetry, and far too many others to keep track of.-Changing climate's effects; anthropogeomorphology; impact of plant and animal, dust and methane, etc.-The 'discovery' of planetary and marine geology.-A fairly uninteresting (and out-of-place) look at geomorphology and culture. The chapters on anthropogeomorphology, climatic effects and how man's studying the alien landscapes of distant planets and the ocean floor were very worthwhile, making me particularly curious of planetary geology. Included at the end is a welcome list of detailed "further reading" suggestions. Overall, it's not a bad introduction, and the suggested reading list closing the overview may prove useful to those with deep pockets and a love for textbooks. 70% [Written February 2011 for LibraryThing.]

This book missed the vast majority of land formations and their origins. Some new and interesting materials, but a disappointment in many areas.

Boring

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