

NATURAL WONDERS

VICTORIA FALLS



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CHAPTER 1

FALLING WATER

The Zambezi River flows in Africa. Along the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe, it drops! It falls nearly 355 feet (108 meters).

Zambezi
River

An aerial photograph of the Zambezi River flowing through a lush green landscape. The river is wide and turbulent, with many small islands and rapids. In the foreground, the river drops over a series of cliffs, creating a wide, powerful waterfall. The surrounding area is densely forested, and a road is visible in the lower left corner. A large, semi-transparent watermark "For Review Only" is diagonally across the image.

It drops into Batoka **Gorge**, creating Victoria Falls. Victoria Falls is the largest falling sheet of water in the world. It is nearly 5,600 feet (1,700 m) long!



**Batoka
Gorge**



mist ▶



The **force** of the water hitting the gorge causes water droplets to rise. This creates mist. It rises nearly 1,300 feet (400 m) in the air. It can be seen from miles away!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The nearby Lozi and Sotho-Tswana peoples call the falls *Mosi-oa-Tunya*. It means “the smoke that thunders.” Why do you think they call it that?



CHAPTER 2

HOW THE FALLS FORMED

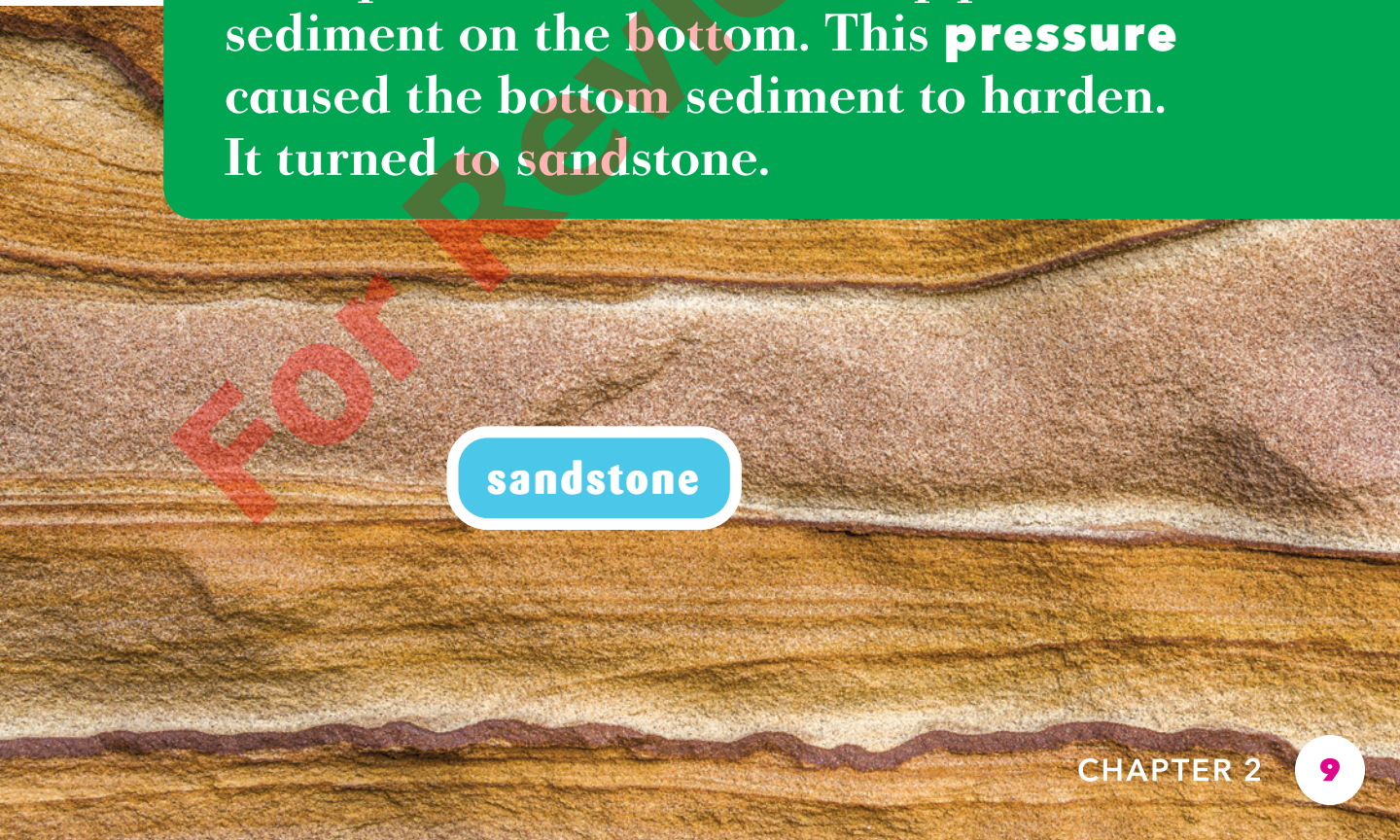
The falls started forming millions of years ago. Volcanoes **erupted**. They covered the area in **lava**. The lava cooled. It formed a **plateau** made of basalt rock. The basalt cooled more. It cracked.



A close-up photograph of dark, jagged basalt rocks. Some rocks have orange-brown mineral deposits or rust on their surfaces. A blue rounded rectangle with the word 'basalt' is overlaid on the top center. A large red 'FOI' watermark is visible on the right side.

basalt

At one point, a lake covered the plateau. **Sediment** in the water filled the cracks. More piled on. Sediment on top pushed down sediment on the bottom. This **pressure** caused the bottom sediment to harden. It turned to sandstone.

A photograph showing horizontal layers of sedimentary rock, primarily sandstone, in shades of tan, brown, and reddish-brown. A blue rounded rectangle with the word 'sandstone' is overlaid on the middle left. A large red 'FOI' watermark is visible on the left side.

sandstone