**Sedimentary rocks** are rocks composed of sediments  
that are cemented together. They are classified by the  
type of sediment.

There are three basic types of sediment:

* **Weathered Rock Sediments**Sedimentary rocks formed from weathered rock   
  are known as **clastic sedimentary rocks**. They contain:  
  Fossils - The preserved remains of organisms   
   that were once living.

Natural cements - Chemicals that can flow around  
 the sediments and then set like cement.   
 E.g. calcium carbonate (calcite), silica, quartz, iron oxide and clay minerals

* **Chemical Sediments**Chemical sedimentary rocks form when materials dissolved in water come out of solution, form a rock. The process is crystallisation, in which the dissolved minerals turn into solid crystals as the water evaporates.
* **Organic Sediments**Organic sedimentary rocks form when dead plant or animal matter accumulates and is cemented together.

**Characteristics of Sedimentary Rocks**

There are three different types of sedimentary rocks. Their characteristics depend on how they are formed.

* **Clastic**- They form layers as sediments build up- The grains are cemented together  
  - They may contain fossils  
  - They are classified according to grain size  
   and chemical composition of the cement.
* **Chemical**- Most chemical sedimentary rocks have crystals  
  - Are quite soft compared with igneous rocks  
  - Generally do not show layering  
  - Occasionally contain fossils
* **Organic**- Can be layered depending on how the fossils   
   and sediments are deposited- They are usually soft although a few such asChert (also called flint) can be fairly hard

**Uses of Sedimentary Rocks**

Sedimentary rocks are widely used for building, paving  
road base, foundations and wall construction. In industry, sedimentary rock is used in many ways:

* Limestone - making cement, glass and steel
* Sandstone - making glass
* Gypsum - making plaster
* Rock Phosphate - making phosphate fertiliser
* Coal - used for energy supply
* Used as a source of minerals:  
  Haematite - source of iron  
  Bauxite - source of aluminium