

## Descriptions of the Major Rock Types

### Basalt

**Rock group:** igneous

**Colour:** dark grey, black or dark brown, weathers to red-brown

**Texture:** fairly smooth, light grains

**Strength:** hard to scratch with your finger nail, breaks into knobby pieces

**Use:** foundations for roads and buildings



**Basalt**



**Giant's Causeway**

## Slate

**Rock group:** metamorphic

**Colour:** dark grey to black, visible layers

**Texture:** fairly smooth, fine-grained

**Strength:** hard to scratch with your finger nail, breaks along layers

**Use:** for roofing buildings in the past, in aquariums



**Slate**



**Slate Roof**

## Limestone

**Rock group:** sedimentary

**Colour:** pale grey to almost grey black, may contain fossils

**Texture:** fairly smooth

**Strength:** easily scratched with your finger nail, breaks into chunky pieces, dissolved by acidic rainwater over time to form caves

**Use:** crushed and used as ballast in roads, source of lime in concrete and mixed with mudstone to make cement



**Limestone**



**The Burren**

## Mudstone

**Rock group:** sedimentary

**Colour:** dark grey to black, has clear layers

**Texture:** smooth, feels slimy when wet

**Strength:** very easily scratched with your finger nail, breaks into smooth, flat pieces

**Use:** crushed and dampened to make bricks, mixed with limestone to make cement



**Mudstone**



**Booley Bay**

## Granite

**Rock group:** igneous

**Colour:** light-coloured, speckled

**Texture:** coarse-grained, gritty, rough

**Strength:** very difficult to scratch, breaks in large chunky pieces

**Use:** polished slabs cover the walls and floors of public buildings, kitchen worktops and gravestones



**Granite**



**Sugarloaf Mountain**

## Schist

**Rock group:** metamorphic

**Colour:** silvery grey or golden brown, shiny

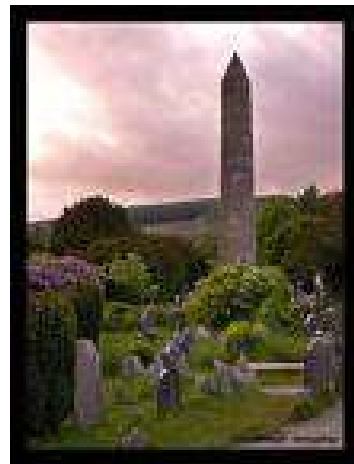
**Texture:** layers easily visible

**Strength:** easily scratched, tiny shiny flakes fall off when scraped

**Use:** building blocks



**Schist**



**Glendalough**

## Sandstone

**Rock group:** sedimentary

**Colour:** varies, pale creamy brown to red, colours associated with regions

**Texture:** rough, visible grains

**Strength:** varies, some impossible to scratch, harder than steel, difficult to break

**Use:** paving, crushed and used beneath railway tracks and driveways, finely crushed for play-sand



**Sandstone**



**Red sandstone**