

## SUPPLEMENT A: PHENOMENA INFORMATION PACKET (1 OF 6)

### Fit of Continents

Three hundred years ago, a man named Abraham Ortelium noticed that maps of the world showed continents that seemed like they would fit together like a puzzle. Specifically, the continents of South America and Africa look like they fit together. North America could also fit snugly into the bulge of northwest Africa. Have you ever noticed this?

It was not until the 1900s that scientists began to consider this apparent phenomenon seriously. What could explain why the continents that are obviously separated by an ocean seem to fit together like a puzzle?

Alfred Wegener put forth the claim that they look like they fit together because they once were together. In other words, Wegener thought that in Earth's distant past, South America was touching Africa and there was no ocean between them. But what evidence did he have for this claim? He had very little in the early 1900s. Wegener therefore devoted his career and life to proving that these continents used to be one. What data did he find? He found quite a bit, and shortly you will hear about these phenomena from other groups in your class.

What conclusions can you draw from this single piece of information about the puzzle-like fit of the continents? What more do you want to know? Answer the questions on Activity Sheet 2.1.

