What is a tectonic plate? https://pubs.usgs.gov/gip/dynamic/tectonic.html
A tectonic plate (also called lithospheric plate) is a massive, irregularly shaped slab of solid rock, generally composed of both continental and oceanic lithosphere. Plate size can vary greatly, from a few hundred to thousands of kilometers across; the Pacific and Antarctic Plates are among the largest. Plate thickness also varies greatly, ranging from less than 15 km for young oceanic lithosphere to about 200 km or more for ancient continental lithosphere (for example, the interior parts of North and South America).

How do these massive slabs of solid rock float despite their tremendous weight? The answer lies in the composition of the rocks. Continental crust is composed of granitic rocks which are made up of relatively lightweight minerals such as quartz and feldspar. By contrast, oceanic crust is composed of basaltic rocks, which are much denser and heavier. The variations in plate thickness are nature's way of partly compensating for the imbalance in the weight and density of the two types of crust. Because continental rocks are much lighter, the crust under the continents is much thicker (as much as 100 km) whereas the crust under the oceans is generally only about 5 km thick. Like icebergs, only the tips of which are visible above water, continents have deep "roots" to support their elevations.

Most of the boundaries between individual plates cannot be seen, because they are hidden beneath the oceans. Yet oceanic plate boundaries can be mapped accurately from outer space by measurements from GEOSAT satellites. Earthquake and volcanic activity is concentrated near these boundaries. Tectonic plates probably developed very early in the Earth's 4.6-billion-year history, and they have been drifting about on the surface ever since-like slow-moving bumper cars repeatedly clustering together and then separating.