Searching Sand: **Sand Guide**

Sand is produced by the breakdown of rocks.

The composition of the sand can tell you where the sand came from.

A. Continent/mountain sand:
   * usually a lot of quartz (clear grains of sand)
   * often other dark grains of different kinds of minerals, often polished
   * all "rock"—no shells, etc. (it is abiotic—no remains of living things)

B. Island sand:
   * often pink or white colors
   * contains bits of shells and corals (these are biotic—from living things)

C. Volcanic sand:
   * often black
   * often glistens or is shiny
   * often with little air bubbles

The angularity and sorting of the sand can give you an approximate idea of how far it has traveled.

A. Sand that is near its origin
   * sand grains are not well sorted; there are many sizes present
   * sand is angular, rough
   * if the sand is from the continent, there may be an assortment of minerals present
   * any parts of living things may still be visible

B. Sand that is far from its origin
   * well sorted, grains tend to be about the same size
   * smooth
   * if the sand is from the continent, it is mostly quartz—the other minerals have washed away

The angularity and surface texture can help you to decide if the sand was eroded by water or by wind.

A. Sand eroded by water
   * angular or rounded, smooth, polished

B. Sand eroded by wind
   * less angular, often pitted, frosted