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Conceptual Physics: _____
Date: _____

Unit X
Geophysics
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Weathering Processes

The natural process that breaks rock into smaller particles is called weathering. If rock breaks into smaller pieces without any change in the rock materials, physical weathering has occurred. Conversely, if some of the rock materials change, chemical weathering has occurred.

Four weathering processes are described below. Read each description. Then, in the space provided, sketch the process and label each item in the process.

1. Plant roots grow into the cracks in rocks. As the roots grow, they extend deeper into the rocks forcing the rocks to break apart.

This is an example of (physical, chemical) weathering. (Circle one.)

Explain your answer. _____

2. Water, like plant roots, fills cracks in a rock. Cool night temperatures cause the water to freeze. As you know, when water freezes it expands. If there is freezing at night and thawing during the day, the rock may break apart.

This is an example of (physical, chemical) weathering. (Circle one.)

Explain your answer. _____

3. Running water in a stream is dissolving the minerals in Rock X. As the stream removes the minerals, Rock X becomes weak. Some of the remaining minerals absorb water, expand, and strain the rock. The weakened rock begins to break apart.

This is an example of (physical, chemical) weathering. (Circle one.)

Explain your answer. _____

4. The sun constantly heats a rock. Heat causes minerals within the rock to expand. As the minerals expand the rock weakens and begins to crumble.

This is an example of (physical, chemical) weathering. (Circle one.)

Explain your answer. _____

