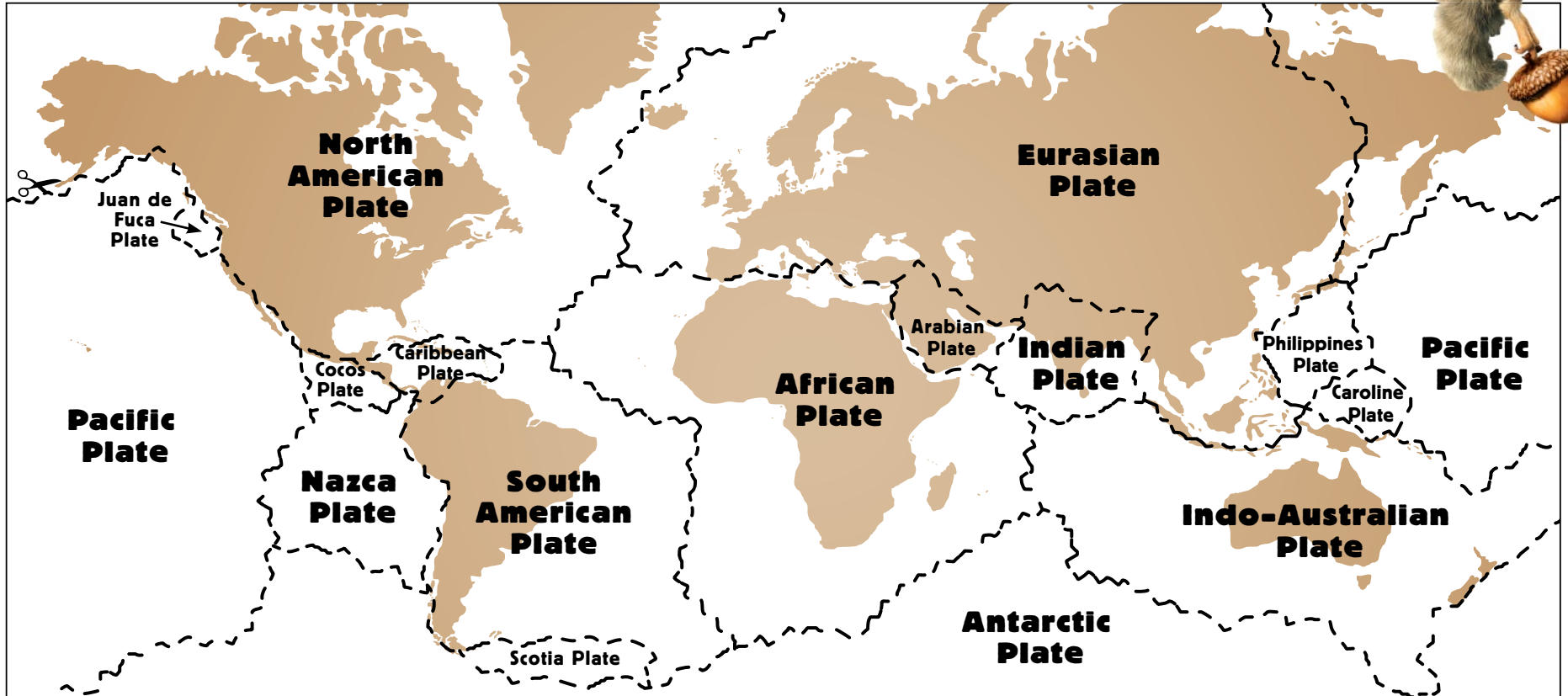


Shaping the Planet

A long, long time ago (about 250 million years!) planet Earth had one enormous landmass called Pangaea. Over millions of years, the landmass split apart. The top layer of Earth, called the **lithosphere**, cracked into pieces and started drifting. The broken sections are called **tectonic plates**. Earth's continents are on tectonic plates, so once the plates started to move, the continents did too!



EARTH'S TECTONIC PLATES



ACTIVITY Earth's tectonic plates are still moving, slowly drifting as much as four inches a year! Cut out the plates along the dotted lines in the map above. Reassemble them on a separate piece of paper. Then, move the plates around to predict what you think might happen to them over the next 10,000, 1 million, or 100 million years.