

## What To Look For in Soil Activity



Soil is made naturally by forces of the earth breaking down rocks through weathering. It is mostly loose material at the surface of the earth that is capable of supporting plant and animal life. Soil is made up of solid, liquid, and gas. The solid part is mineral and organic matter. Since soil fits loosely together it leaves empty spaces between the soil particles that are either filled with air or water. Also water can be absorbed by the soil itself making it damp.

Today, each of you is going to look at a soil sample with a hand lens to discover the tiny things that are in the soil. We will be looking for animal life, plant parts, and rocks and minerals.

### **Procedure:**

1. Dump your soil sample onto the paper towel provided.
2. Spread the soil out thin with your craft stick.
3. With your hand lens, you will be looking for mineral and rock evidences, plant evidences, and animal evidences.
4. Your group has three cups in front of you. Designate one for the mineral and rock evidences, plant evidences, and animal evidences.
5. As you find these evidences in your soil, use your tweezers to put them in their designated cups. Be sure to wash the rocks off first in the cup of water that has been given to you before you put it in the mineral and rock cup.
6. Don't hurry. Take your time to look through all your soil. Use your stick to move the soil around. You are looking for the tiniest things, not just the big things. You will be surprised at what you will find that are very small.
7. When you are done, answer these questions on the other side of this paper.

**Questions about what you found.**

1. What are the mineral and rock evidences you found?

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2. What are plant evidences that you found?

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3. What are animal evidences that you found?

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4. Why are each of these parts important to the soil?

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## Components of Topsoil

