

Investigating soils

Examining soil samples and their constituents

This test is used to examine the constituent materials of a soil. Children can compare soil samples from different parts of the locality or compare topsoil and subsoil from a soil profile.

Procedure

- Children cover the desks with newspaper
- If comparing topsoil, subsoil and bedrock children fill in the soil prediction sheet
- Distribute the soil samples in small plastic/foil containers
- Children need to be familiar with the vocabulary to describe texture; sticky, grainy, gritty, sandy etc.
- Children record their investigation results on the task card
- Discuss with the children the implications of their results for gardening/farming practices

Soil prediction sheet

Discuss with your partner and write yes or no in the boxes

	Topsoil	Subsoil
Contains stones/grit		
Contains some mini-beasts		
Contains twigs, plants.		
Contains man-made materials		

Examine, explore, investigate and compare soils

	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Colour			
Soil is stuck together in lumps			
How does it feel when you rub it between your fingers			
Can you describe its smell?			
Can you squeeze it into a ball?			
Can you roll it like a sausage?			
Contains little stones/grit Contains big stones			
Contains some mini-beasts			
Contains twigs, plants.			
Contains man-made materials			