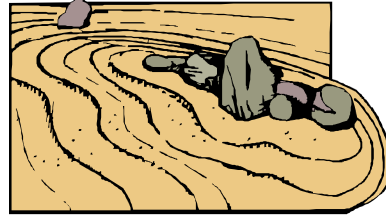




Discovering Rocks

Grade Level: Elementary

Duration: 2 class periods



Purpose: This is an easy introduction to rocks for students that allow them to hone their observation skills.

Objective: The student will be able to work with a partner to sort and classify rocks according to similarities and differences.

Nevada State Department of Education Standards:

Earth's Composition and Structure (Unifying Concept C) Earth is composed of materials that move through the biogeochemical cycles. Earth's features are shaped by ongoing and dynamic processes. These processes can be constructive or destructive and occur over geologic time scales.

Materials:

Paper bags or baggies

Large butcher paper for word web and magic markers

Yarn

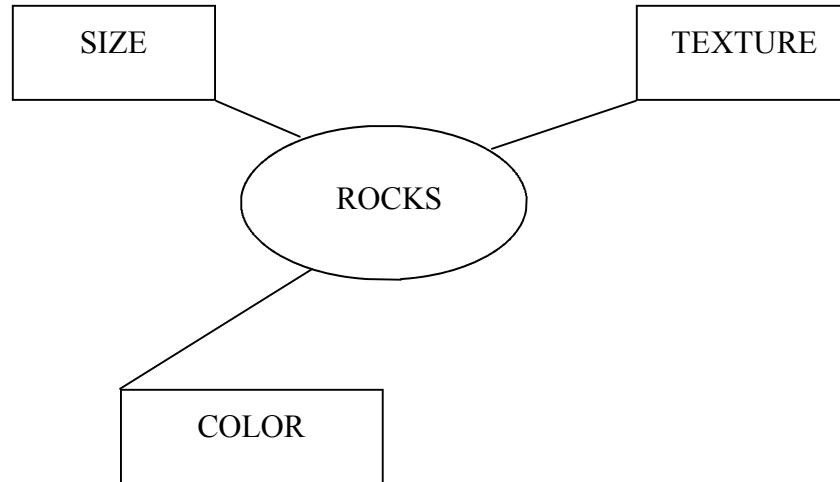
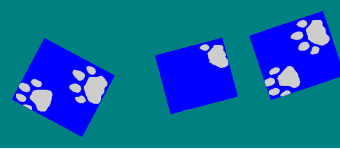
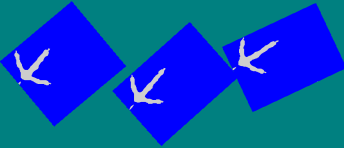
Carmel apple and knife (optional)

Optional: *The Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth* by Joanna Cole (or another book on the rock cycle)

Anticipatory Set: Begin the lesson by telling students they are going on a Rock Hunt. Give each student a bag and go looking for rocks—either at Water Canyon or close to school. Have each student choose three rocks for this activity. If you are unable to go rock hunting, have students bring in three rocks from home. The wider the variety of rocks, the more fun this activity will be!

Developing the Lesson: Now that your students have collected rocks for your class rock collection, brainstorm what your class already knows about rocks. Do this by having your students sit in a circle and place the rock collection in the middle. On the butcher paper, made a word web of rock facts. Ask students the following questions to record on your word web.

1. What color are the rocks?
2. What texture do the rocks have? How do the rocks feel?
3. How big or small are the rocks?



After recording your class's observations, explain that the earth's crust is made of rock. Explain to the students that the earth is like a caramel covered apple. The soil is the caramel, the skin of the apple is the crust, the fleshy part of the apple is the mantle, and the core of the apple is the earth's core. Cut up a caramel apple with a knife as you explain this to your class.

Optional: Read to your class a book, such as *The Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth* by Joanna Cole, to illustrate the rock cycle. Discuss the rock cycle with your class.

Have each child take the rocks that they found for this lesson and a length of yarn (only one per group). In groups of two or three, have the children sort and classify rocks by taking the length of yarn and making a circle. Have the students discuss how the rocks are similar and different. Students should place the rocks that are similar inside the circle and the rocks that are different on the outside.

Conclusion: Review with your class what you learned about rocks. Refer back to the word web you created. Discuss with students how rock is used to make buildings and other objects. Brainstorm a list of things in your school that are made of rock. For homework, have students find three things in your town that are made of rock.

Evaluation: Evaluate students' knowledge by observing them as they work in groups to sort and classify rocks. Informally assess students by their contributions to the class discussion and their ability to answer questions.