

INDOORS * GRADES 2-6 * FALL, WINTER, SPRING * ACTIVITY



Sensory Soil

DESCRIPTION

Through exploring soil in this activity, students use most of their senses to discover qualities of different soils.

OBJECTIVE

To explore with our senses different kinds of soil.

MATERIALS

- * 4 containers with different types of soil: clay, compost, sand, garden soil
- * 4 lunch bags
- * scrap paper
- * 4 large pieces of construction paper
- * a set of handheld musical instruments, such as shakers (optional)

PREPARATION

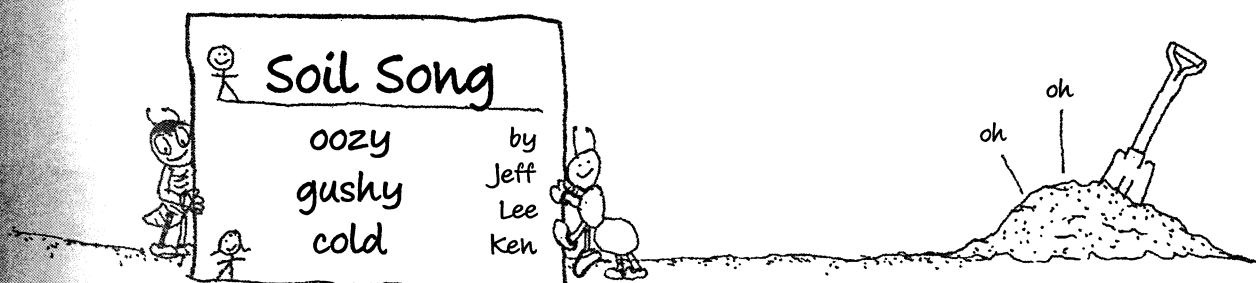
Set up four stations in the classroom or outdoors. At each station place a container of soil, one lunch bag, strips of scrap paper, pencils, and one large sheet of paper. Make sure it is easy for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the class to gather around one station.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Look at this container I am holding. Which senses can you use to describe what is in this container? Sight? Hearing? Smell? Touch? (*Not taste!*) What are some words you could use to describe soil? In this lesson are four stations with four different soils; you will spend a few minutes at each station. Each of you will look very closely at the soil at each station. Be sure to smell a clump of it, and rub it with your fingers near your ears to hear what it sounds like. Then each of you will choose a word to describe the soil at the station, write the word on a strip of paper, and put the paper in the lunch bag.

ACTION

1. Divide the class into four groups. Each group will spend a few minutes at each soil station exploring each sample.



2. At each station, ask each student to write on a strip of paper a descriptive word about the sample and place it in the bag.
3. After the groups have been to all stations, have them return to the station where they started and open the bag of words. Have each group use all the words to compose a Soil Skit. Their skit might be a poem, a story, or a song. Each word must be used once; if the same word appears three times, it must be used three times. Encourage creativity; students can act out their poem, add musical instruments, or even choreograph it as a dance. They can choose the order of the words, the rhythm, and whether or not to include gestures or hand-clapping. Have the students title their skits.
4. Have each group present their skit to the class.
5. Post the words from the skits and attach the proper classification (*sand, compost, garden soil, or clay*) to each one. Explain that students will learn more about these soils in upcoming activities.

WRAP UP

Which soil had the strongest smell? Which felt the weirdest? Which felt smooth and slippery? Which felt gritty and coarse? Which made the loudest sound? Compare the two soils that seemed very different from each other. Compare the two soils that seemed the most similar.

DIGGING DEEPER

You can use this same activity format to conduct a comparative taste test with food! At each station, have the students taste a different variety of tomato, for example. Then have them record their words, and create stories, poems, or songs about each one.

