

# Sensual Soil

## Description

People often mask many of their sensory experiences, focusing only on the visual. 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

Four containers with different types of soil: clay, compost, sand, garden soil  
Four lunch bags  
Scrap paper  
Four large pieces of construction paper

## Preparation

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

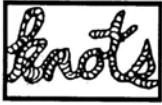
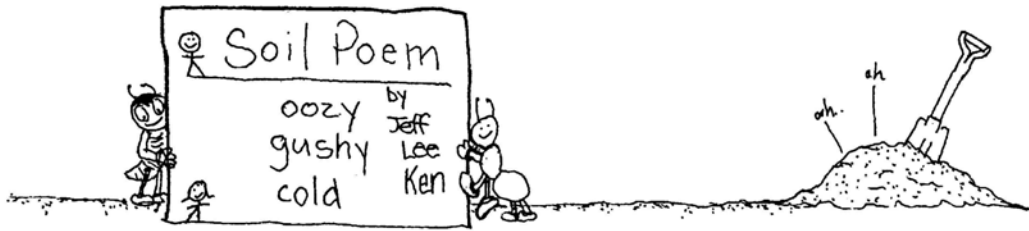


Look at this container I am holding. What tools do you have to explore what is in this container? (senses) What are some words you would use to describe something that you saw? Heard? Smelled? Felt? In this lesson you will spend a few minutes at each station. Each of you will look very closely at the soil at each station; smell a clump; 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 it on a slip of paper, and put the paper in the lunch bag.



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 scrap of paper a descriptive word about the sample and place it in the bag.
3. After the groups have been to all stations, give each one a bag of words. Have them use the words in the bag to compose a Soil Poem, and have them copy it onto a large sheet of paper. The poem will be a random ordering of the words in the bag. It could even have a title if the students are so inspired.
4. Have one person from each group read their poem to the class.

5. Post the poems and attach the proper classification (sand, compost, garden soil, or clay) to each one. Explain that students will learn more about these soils as part of the Life Lab program.



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.