

See Inside the Soil!

Soil is everywhere! It is like skin on the earth. It is not just dirt – that is what gets under your fingernails! Soil has tiny particles of rock and clay and silt. It has bits of dead leaves and ants and other plants and animals.

There is a lot of life in the soil! It is home for big animals like moles and ground squirrels. It is a home for little animals like slugs and worms and centipedes. These little animals eat bits of dead plants and animals and turn them into smaller bits. Tiny microbes eat the smaller bits and turn them into food for plants. Plants grow in healthy soil, and you eat food that grows in soil.

Be a soil scientist! Draw or write down what you see in the soil in three steps:

1. What do you see with your eyes?	
2. With a magnifying glass?	
3. With a microscope?	

What do you like about soil!



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Explore more of the world with a hand lens!

Look at each object with your eyes. Then, use the lens to see what they look like up close. Start with these objects.

Draw or write down what you see. **Tip:** Shine a light on the object to get a better look.

<p>A leaf. Can you see veins? Veins carry food to the plant.</p> <p>What else? What color is the leaf? How big is it?</p>	
<p>An ant, or other insect.</p> <p>What do the eyes look like?</p> <p>Does it have hair?</p> <p>How many legs?</p>	
<p>A grain of salt.</p>	
<p>A grain of sugar. Is the sugar different from the salt?</p>	
<p>A flower. How does it look up close?</p>	

Want to try more? How about an ice cube, food, clothes, or tree bark? What else do *you* want to look at?