



## Handling Rocks - Teacher Notes

Handling rocks is a great way for students to discover concepts such as texture, colour, shape and size. A collection of rocks is relatively easy to find from your local area (remembering that nothing should be taken from national parks) or at hardware stores and gardening suppliers. Where possible, it is best to try and include raw, unpolished rock samples to show the students how the rocks exist in nature.

Students can explore:

- Textures- rough/smooth, shiny/dull, coarse/fine
- Size - big/small (put in order biggest to smallest), heavy/light (discuss with students how the biggest rocks may not be the heaviest)
- Colours - streak (by rubbing some rocks on the unglazed back of a ceramic tile, minerals in the rock will leave a coloured streak on the tile. This may be an interesting art project also).
- Shape - smooth/angular, uneven/round (may be useful to have some rocks in the collection that are cut into other shapes (e.g. paving stones can be cubes or rectangles)
- Buoyancy - sink/float. Pieces of pumice will float, due to the lack of connectivity of the holes in the rock (and its light weight). This is a unique property of pumice, due to bubbles of gas becoming trapped in the lava that cools quickly to form the rock when it is blasted out of volcanoes.

Note: Some of the pumice sold as a way to treat rough skin is not natural pumice and will not float.

