



Exploration Table - Teacher Notes

An exploration table is a great way to get students thinking about earth science. Below are some suggestions for a range of objects for the students to touch, smell, listen to and look at. It is important to have the rule that students must not put any of the objects in their mouth and introduce the idea that when we are doing Science, we don't use our sense of taste. It's also important for the students to wash their hands thoroughly when they have finished exploring.

Objects you could put on the table include:

- Rocks! This could be rocks you or the students have collected, some that have been purchased, from hardware stores like Bunnings, or even some of the ones made in the exercises in this package. Egg cartons are an easy way to store a collection of small rocks.
- Crystals. These are often very shiny and pretty and will attract students' attention and can be obtained at low cost from new age type shops.
- Fossils. Some of the more common fossils can be obtained at low cost from rock and gem shops or on the internet. To preserve fossils that are to be handled a lot, you may like to coat them in a clear resin.
- Magnifying glasses to allow students to closely examine the rocks and crystals.
- Rulers and tape measures so students can compare the sizes of rocks.
- Balance scales so students can explore the weight of different rocks and come to find out that a bigger sized rock may not be heavier than a smaller sized rock.
- Shells collected from the beach and some plasticine so students can make some moulds of the shells and imprints of the rocks.





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- Paper and crayons or pencils so the students can make rubbings of the rocks and shells on the table. They could also draw pictures of the objects.
- Water, spray bottles and eye droppers. Students can spray or drop water on to different rocks and see how the water behaves. Does it soak in quickly? Does it run off the rock? Does the water change the colour of the rock? Does the water move all the way through the rock?
- Unglazed tiles so students can rub rocks onto them to look at the streak colour. The back of glazed tiles is also suitable.
- Volcano models. These can either be homemade (e.g. papier mâché) or purchased (some models even split in half to show inside the volcano). If your school has a 3D printer, there are some good volcano model designs that can be downloaded and printed.

