



# Formation of Soil: Student Activity Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 1: What Is Soil?

1. What do you notice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Sort your soil into small separate piles. How do you think these things got to be where you found them?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2: Sizes Within Soil How Does Soil Form?

1. Record your observations in the table below.

Time	Observations
1 minute	
10 minutes	
24 hours	

2. Draw your vial after 24 hours below.
3. Soil scientists use this technique to separate soil by particle size. Look at your vial and see if you can locate different layers based on particle size. Mark those layers on your drawing. What do you notice about the size of particles in the different layers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Label sand, silt, and clay on your drawing above.

### Part 3: How Does Soil Feel?

5. What do you notice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Describe what you are feeling. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Part 4: Soils Ability To Hold Moisture

1. How long did it take for the water to reach the bottom of the tube with rocks? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Predict how long you think it will take for the water to reach the bottom of the tube with soil? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Compare your results to your prediction. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do you think soil scientists are interested in soil's ability to hold moisture? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Part 5: How Does Soil Form?

1. Record your observations in the table below.

	Observations
<b>Rocks before shaking</b>	
<b>Rocks after shaking</b>	

2. What is different in the tray after shaking the rocks? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did you notice in the tray? Where did it come from? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you think would happen if you shook the rocks for hours or years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What other ways do you think rocks break apart in nature? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_