

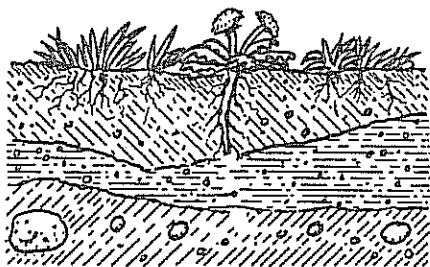
Just Plain Dirt

Name _____

Soil is made of pieces of rocks and minerals that have been broken down by nature over a period of thousands of years.

Soil is found in three layers. The top layer, where plants usually grow, is called **topsoil**. The second layer, which contains pebbles, sand, and clay, is called **subsoil**. The bottom layer contains large rocks and is called **bedrock**.

- How is soil formed? _____
- The foundation of a very large building often goes all the way down to the bedrock. Why? _____



Soil	Structure	Properties
Sand	Small pieces of quartz	Does not hold water
Clay	Very small pieces of mineral other than quartz	Holds water very well
Loam	Sand, clay, and humus (decayed plants and animals)	Holds water yet drains

Tell what type of soil you would choose in each situation below. The chart will help you.

1. Garden _____ Why? _____
2. Bottom of a man-made pond _____ Why? _____
3. Bottom layer of soil in a landfill _____ Why? _____
4. Soil under swings and slide on a playground _____ Why? _____
5. Soil under the sod of a ball field _____ Why? _____

Find Out

Investigate samples of soil found near your home and school. How fast do equal amounts of water percolate (drain) into the soil? Try some other tests of your own.