



# Rocks | Exploring Soil and Rocks | The Changing Landscape

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News & Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The 'earth and atmosphere' area of the science curriculum now introduces rocks and soils at an early stage alongside simple weather observations.

Terry Jennings' **Rocks** provides useful information for juniors accompanied by various related activities. Using a mixture of diagrams, drawings and photographs, he examines features of rocks such as texture, weight and solubility. Ways of sorting rock samples into groups - classified as sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic - are suggested, and erosion is considered by looking at how big rocks become little rocks. This works well. Slightly less successful is the attention given to tarmac and concrete which are treated as 'artificial rocks'. Finally there is a brief index and a list of 'More things to do' for children able to pursue the subject further.

The book does not offer a detailed look at its subject but it does provide a balanced introduction which includes activities likely to arouse interest. These include an activity for grading soil which can be compared with a soil grading activity in Ed Catherall's **Exploring Soils and Rocks**. The latter is intended for children studying the subject during curriculum levels three to six. For the younger children the aim is to note some of the differences between soil particles when they are graded in water. The book for older children requires a more detailed analysis of grading, comparisons between sand, soil and compost - and some organisation of the results in relation to information about organic and inorganic soils. Ed Catherall's book is organised into double-page spreads which provide information, an activity and test questions. The material is well organised, clearly and attractively presented. But using the same format throughout the book does tend to provoke automatic responses and lower interest. However, the subject is thoroughly examined and features such as the index and glossary are reliable.

**The Changing Landscape** also uses the double-page spread for aspects of its subject but the format is not allowed to

become constraining. The book feels as if you are reading about the subject, not being trained to make a particular response. However, it contains fewer activities and less material that children can relate to their own surroundings. Both books provide information at a similar level and are complementary rather than competitive. **Exploring Soils and Rocks** offers aspects of erosion, soils, weathering and plant effects that children can test in their own back yards. **The Changing Landscape** takes a global view of such things as volcanoes, surface plates and continents adrift.

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