



Cycling Back to Nature: Soils Alive! From Tiny Rocks to Compost



IN A NUTSHELL

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SUBJECTS

Science
Social Studies

This is a collection of lessons designed to teach students about rocks, minerals, soil, and a number of issues related to soil use. The book begins with a general description of soil's inorganic components, then discusses the organic elements, how living organisms interact with soil, and our own dependence on the soil and its health. It ends with a unit on composting. The nineteen principal activities are experience-based, and involve the students in such tasks as testing the hardness of minerals, observing the different kinds of decomposition, and searching for earthworms in samples of soil. The lessons list key concepts, materials needed, time for preparation, interesting facts for the teacher, vocabulary, follow-up activities, guiding questions, and suggestions for bridges between lessons. The book also includes pedagogical suggestions, activity sheets for students, a glossary and a list of resources. The lessons can be taught in as few as six one-hour sessions.

Grade Level
5 & up
Length
60 pages
Date Published
1995

THE BOTTOM
L I N E

"A well-written, interdisciplinary curriculum
with excellent hands-on activities."

What the REVIEWERS Said !	Key Characteristics	Strengths Noted	Other Considerations
	Fairness and Accuracy	Information appears to be factual.	Sources of information not cited. Material not made relevant to urban populations.
	Depth	Presents concepts in context. Activities build on one another.	
	Emphasis on Skills Building	Develops critical and creative thinking skills. Includes using cost/benefit analysis.	
	Action Orientation	Empowers students to take action locally. Instills sense of personal responsibility.	Seems to assume students have access to needed materials and resources.
	Instructional Soundness	Material is made relevant to learners' everyday lives. Allows for learner-centered instruction.	Little emphasis on interdisciplinary ties.
	Usability	Format is clear and easy to use. Materials are long-lived. Easily adaptable to a variety of uses.	Intended audience not clearly stated.

"Nothing is mentioned about inner-city children who might see plenty of garbage."

"Provides a teacher with hands-on science and composting activities."