



# Core Samples with Play Dough

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Science  
Grades 3–5



## Introduction

Not all parts of the earth are the same. In this lesson, students will use play dough that is designed to look like different types of earth. They will take samples from the play dough and use them to answer questions.

## Learning Objectives

([Earth's Systems](#))

- Students will understand not all areas of the earth are the same.
- Students will take samples of “earth” and answer questions using those samples.

## Materials Needed

- Cup of dirt
- Play dough in green, red, yellow, blue
- Recording sheet
- iPad

by Samantha Grover

## Procedure

1. Hold up a cup of dirt and ask students what they notice (answers may be that it's dirt, it's black, it has specks in it, etc.). Tell students that they are correct; this is dirt. It came from the ground. But if one were to dig deeper, they may notice that parts of the earth are different from each other.
2. Tell students that the earth has different layers. On the board write the following labels that describe different parts of the earth: soft top, water, soft sand or clay, harder rock. Tell students this is one way to describe different earth samples.
3. Read the book [The Earth's Layers](#) by Samantha Grover to give students an overview of soil and the world underground. After reading, tell students that today they are going to take samples from some play dough you've created to look like the earth.
4. “You and a partner will use a straw (stick the straw straight down, pull up, and collect your sample on your desk) to take one sample from each of the two large chunks of play dough. You will use those two samples to answer questions.”

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