
What is Sand?

Level

2-3

Key question

What are the differences between sand particles collected up a beach?

Key outcome

Describe the features of sand found at different places.

Adapted from Moroney et al,
Coastal Activities for Primary Students.

What you need

Paper to work on
Glue or clear contact
Magnifying glasses
Sieves of different size, or
Home made sieves of stocking, gauze, or window netting
Field sheet

What you do

You can work in pairs or small groups. Collect the appropriate equipment. Each group goes to a different site up a beach, some close to the water, others at the top. Each group does the same field work.

1. Collect a small amount of sand.
2. On a sheet of paper carefully separate some particles or use a sieve to separate the particles and sort them into the categories below. You need patience!
3. Use a magnifying glass to examine the samples. What do you observe? What else did you find in your samples of sand? Can you identify these? Are they all natural items or are they from human activities? Where do the stone particles come from? Are they rough feeling or smooth? How do they become smooth?
4. Lightly smear some glue onto the field sheet and sprinkle on the sample, one box at a time. Or you can use clear contact and sprinkle the particles onto the paper first then cover with a square of contact to hold them in place (see accompanying field sheet).

Discussion

Compare samples between groups from various places up the beach. Are there differences in the grain size and composition of the sand?

You may also be able to compare a small collection of sand from different beaches.

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