

Sugar Cube Weathering Activity



Rocks are very hard and mountains are very big.
But the forces of wind and water can wear them away.
This activity models how rocks can wear away.

Collect the following items and place them on a paper plate for each group:

- 3 different grades of sand paper - cut to fit inside the film canisters
- 3 film canisters
- 3 sugar cubes
- Hand lenses
- Small paper plate to hold everything

The directions for this activity are given orally.

Have the children examine the sand paper with the hand lenses.

- What is the same?
- What is different?

In this model the sugar cube will be a rock and the sand paper will be the forces of erosion - wind and water.

- What do you think will happen to a rock exposed to wind and water?
- What do you think will happen to the sugar cube exposed to erosions force?
- Do you think the kind of sandpaper (erosional force) will make a difference?

Have the children slip the pieces of sandpaper into the film canisters with the rough side to the middle.

Have them place one sugar cube into each canister, place the lid on it, and have the children shake the canisters for 1 minute.

Have them take the lid off of the canister and carefully take the sugar cubes out.

- What do you observe?
- Which sugar cube eroded the most?
- Why?

The forces of erosion work to wear down mountains. Rocks, much like the sugar cubes, are worn down. The same forces that cause weathering also are used to carry away the broken bits. The wind blows them away. The water transports them to a new place. Fast moving rivers have the energy to move larger pieces. The rocks are banged and broken as they bump into each other.



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