

ACTIVITY!

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PAINT WITH SOIL

Soil from different locations can be different colors, depending on what it's made of. Since ancient times, soil has been used for painting. You too can create works of art with soil!

1 Put one soil sample at a time on a piece of paper and use the hammer or mallet to crush it into very small pieces.

2 Put the pieces into a plastic ziploc bag and use the rolling pin to crush it into a very fine powder. If you have a mortar and pestle, you can grind it into a powder that way. Repeat with all of your samples until they are all very fine powders. Keep them separate!

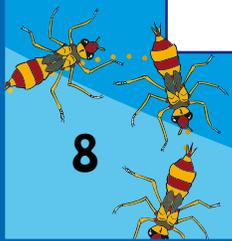
3 Place one soil powder sample into a paper cup. Stretch the pantyhose over the top of the cup and shake the cup over a new piece of paper or a paper plate. You're going to end up with a super-fine powder on your paper to use as a base for your paint. Repeat with the other colors on separate pieces of paper. When you're finished, put each colored powder into a new paper cup.

SUPPLIES

- ❁ several dry soil samples from different places, about ¼ cup each
- ❁ several pieces of paper
- ❁ hammer or mallet
- ❁ plastic ziploc bags
- ❁ rolling pin, or mortar and pestle
- ❁ paper cups
- ❁ small section of old pantyhose
- ❁ paper plate or sheet of paper
- ❁ marker or pen
- ❁ tape
- ❁ clear acrylic artist paint (you can use white paint or even just water)
- ❁ small artist paint brush or old bits of sponge or rag



These famous cave paintings in Lascaux, France, were made with soil. They have survived for over 17,000 years! How are they different from paintings you see on the walls of museums? What threats does this art face?



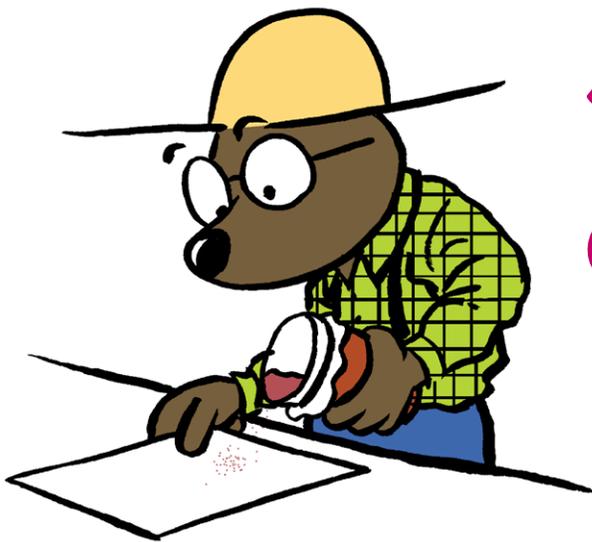
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topsoil: the top layer of soil.

WORDS to KNOW

4 On another piece of paper, sketch out a drawing with your marker or pen. You can skip this step if you just want to start painting! Use the tape to secure your paper flat to the surface you're working on. It will need to stay very still until it's done drying.



Did You Know?

Soil formation doesn't happen overnight, or even in a week, a month, or a whole year. In some places it can take more than 500 years to form an inch of **topsoil!**



5 Add a small bit of clear paint to each color of powdered soil and mix until they're at the consistency of paint. If you're using water, get your sponge or paintbrush wet and dip it in the powder.

6 Begin painting! When you're finished, let the painting stay flat and undisturbed until it's dry.

TRY THIS! Mix your powder and clear paint into different consistencies. Does a thinner mixture look different on paper? How? How do the different colors and consistencies look when they've dried?

