

What is soil and what is it made of?

Is all soil the same? What makes up the different types of soil?

Soil is formed slowly. It takes millions of years for a small amount of soil to be formed. Soil is formed by rock material being broken down into smaller pieces. Soil is also made up of decaying plant and animal matter. Soil is a mixture of four components: mineral grains (sand, silt and clay), organic matter or humus (the remains of once living things), water, and air. Soil has spaces in it. These spaces are filled with water and air.

Moving water, wind, plants and changes in temperature can crack large rocks. Over a very long time, large rocks are broken into tiny pieces. Plants grow in the cracks in rocks causing the rocks to break apart into smaller pieces as well as water gets into the cracks of rocks and freezes causing the rocks to break down. These small pieces of rock become soil.

There are many different types of soil. The type of soil is determined by the size of tiny rock particles. Soils are different depending what is in them. There are many types of rocks, plants and animals that all contribute to the make up of the soil.

Soil has four non living parts: rocks, air, water and humus.

What is soil and what is it made of?

1. It takes a thousand years for soil to form?
true false

2. Soil is made of:

- a) air, water, broken shells and broken rocks
- b) mud, grass, decaying plants
- c) leaves, dead animals rotten plants
- d) all of the above

3. What are three things that can crack or break down rocks?

4. How many different types of soil are there?
one ten a few many

5. The type of soil is determined by -----.

6. What are the four non-living parts of soil?

