



## SECTION 3: WHAT IS SOIL?

### LAB

### INTRODUCTION

Soil is the layer of organic (living) and inorganic (non-living) materials on the surface of the Earth. Clay is inorganic and may feel soft due to the tiny particles. Loam is soil rich in organic materials, sand, and clay. Humus consists of decaying organic material and is loosely packed to hold more air and water.

In this activity, students will observe different types of soil with magnifiers. Students are challenged to bring in materials such as sticks, sand, leaves, bark, and roots that decay into soil.

### ASSESSMENT ANCHORS ADDRESSED

- S4.A.2.2** Identify appropriate instruments for a specific task and describe the information the instrument can provide.
- S4.C.1.1** Describe observable physical properties of matter.
- S4.A.3.3** Identify and make observations about patterns that regularly occur and reoccur in nature.
- S4.D.1.2** Identify the types and uses of Earth's resources.

### PURPOSE

Students discover the properties of soil and how it is made.

### MATERIALS

#### For Each Pair of Students

Tray of potting soil	Tray of clay
Tray of humus	Slim plastic jar
Magnifiers	Worksheet

*Teacher provides items marked with \**