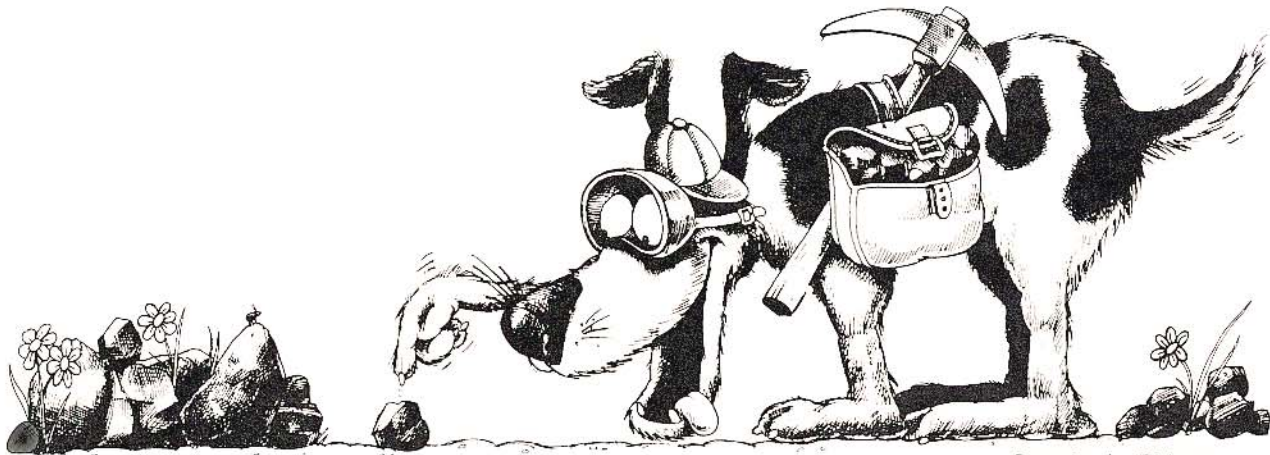




BE A ROCK HOUND

Collect rocks and put them on display.



Drawing by Pidgeon

GRADES K-7

Materials (all optional):

- rock and mineral field guides
- backpacks or collecting bags
- first aid kit
- masking tape
- pencils
- notebooks
- newspaper
- geologists' hammers and picks
- safety goggles
- hand lenses
- glue
- shallow boxes
- shoe boxes or egg cartons

ROCK HOUNDING TIPS

WHERE TO LOOK: Rocks show up just about anywhere, but some spots are better collection sites than others. If you can, have your group look in mountainous country, volcanic regions, and along outcrops (areas of exposed bedrock). Beaches, river banks, and stream beds can also be good places to “hound.” Road cuts, cliffs, and cliff bases can be real collecting hot spots, too.

Quarries, mines, and construction sites are often good places to look for rocks, but they can be dangerous.

WHAT TO BRING: Depending on how serious you want to get with your rock hounding, you can have the kids use a lot of equipment—or almost none at all. You might want them to simply pick up any rocks they find and make a display out of them. You can even have them start their collections with “store bought” specimens. Many rock and mineral shops and museums sell samples of different kinds of rocks. You can also order rocks from certain catalogs. But hardcore hounders will need safety goggles, hand lenses, masking tape, pencils,

field guides, notebooks, backpacks, and geologists' hammers or picks. *Hammers and picks are often available at army surplus, hardware, and geology supply stores. But make sure you get hammers and picks that are made especially for rock hounding. Regular hammers and picks may crack or shatter when used to break off rock samples.*

HOW TO HOUND: You don't have to follow a set procedure when rock hounding, but here are some simple steps you might want to have your students follow:

- Pick up or hammer off a small rock specimen (one that fits comfortably in your hand).
- Mark a number on a piece of tape and stick it on the rock. Write the number and a brief description of the rock in a notebook. Also, write in the date and the place where the rock was found.
- Wrap the rock in some newspaper for protection before putting it in a backpack or collecting bag.

PREPARING YOUR COLLECTION: After returning from your hounding hike, have the students wash the dirt from the rocks so they can get a good look at them. (It's also easier to see colors when a rock is wet.) Another way to get a good idea of a rock's true features is to wrap it in cloth or newspaper and break it open with a hammer. (The inside isn't worn and weathered like the outside.) The students can use a hand lens to look for fossils, crystals, flecks of metal, and so on.

The students can sort their rocks any number of ways. For example, they could categorize them according to color, how they formed (igneous, metamorphic, or sedimentary), kind (limestone, granite, shale, etc.), or the area in which you found them. After the kids sort their collections, they can make simple display cases by gluing the rocks inside a shallow box. Or they can store the rocks in a shoe box or egg carton. Either way, tell the kids to be sure each rock is labeled so they'll have a record of their collections.

CODE OF COMMON SENSE AND COURTESY: Here are a few guidelines that rock hounds should always keep in mind:

- ⊗ Take only what you need for your collection.
- ⊗ Never go rock hounding by yourself. Always let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return.
- ⊗ Wear boots or sturdy shoes.
- ⊗ Take along a snack and something to drink. A first aid kit is a good idea too.
- ⊗ Carry out your litter when you leave.
- ⊗ Stay out of caves and mine shafts.
- ⊗ When climbing on loose rock, make sure nobody is below you.
- ⊗ Always ask permission before hounding on private land, in quarries, or in parks. *Keep in mind that many parks don't allow collecting of any kind. It's always a good idea to ask first.*
- ⊗ Stick to trails when you can, especially in parks and on private property.
- ⊗ **Always** wear safety goggles when chipping at rocks. And make sure people close to you have goggles on too.

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