

Colorific Art Activity - Dirty Diorama

The art activity for this module is to create a diorama that helps to illustrate the horizons of the soil.

As with all Colorific activities students are encouraged to use bright colors that do not necessarily reflect true to life, this adds an element of fun and individuality to art work and allows students to appreciate their own work without being bound by trying to achieve realism.

Suitable For: Grades 1 through to 6.

Time Estimate: 30-40 minutes.

Activity Overview: Students create and display three dimensional models of the soil and plants.

Learning Objectives:

- To enjoy manipulating, blending and moulding the clay.
- To encourage students to enjoy using vibrant colored materials.

Materials (per student):

- Red Dough Worx Blob (to combine with Green for soil)
- Green Dough Worx Blob (to combine with Red for soil)
- Yellow Dough Worx Blob
- Blue Dough Worx Blob
- Matchsticks (handful per student)
- Pom Poms Assorted
- Scatters Assorted Shapes
- Sequin Pack Large Stars Assorted
- Additional materials:
 - Box Lid
 - PVA glue

Preparation: Preparation required will depend on the abilities of students and time available. You may wish to ask students to bring a box lid from home on which to base the soil profile, but making one in class from cardboard may be appropriate depending on the resources you have available.

We also recommend that you have a class discussion or some research time about the different layers of the earth's crust - the regolith, subsoil, organic layer in particular.

Procedure (see visual instructions):

1. Take a handful of yellow (or any other colour) Dough Worx and mould into large flattened egg shapes to form the bedrock layer at the base of the lid.
2. Using another colour Dough Worx make smaller odd rock shapes to form the 'Regolith' layer.
3. Smooth a large section of Dough Worx in a third colour along the lid to form the subsoil and then sprinkle with scatters and push into the Dough to represent sand, mineral and clay deposits scattered throughout the layer.
4. Blend a lump of red and green Dough Worx together to get a brown color - that is loads of fun for everyone!
5. Squish that along the top of the subsoil layer to make the organic layer, leaving the top rough and uneven to represent the ground.

6. Using the matchsticks and PVA glue, arrange the sticks as if they are like the root system of a plant going into the soil and branching out. Then build up a tree with matchsticks or popsticks creating the trunk and branches above the ground level into the sky. Place a few matchsticks along the ground level for flowers, or agricultural crops, or vegetables (depending on what other discussions you have had or plan to have over the course of the module).
7. Using PVA glue and assorted star shape scatters create the foliage and fruit for your trees and flowers.

Variations:

- Let students really enjoy themselves with color and rather than sticking to blue and brown let them be surreal in their diorama!
- Make your own 'lid' support for the diorama with cardboard and folding and tape.
- Make a large group diorama in a class made box.
- Use the entire box. Remove the lid and turn the box upside down, tape or glue the lid to the side of the box and create the Dough Worx horizons to fill the lid. Use the flat surface of the box itself to create an entire 3D diorama of trees, flowers, crops, etc in the Dough Worx on the box base to make a really spectacular scene. Cut leaves out of paper to make the organic layer and trees.
- Add many other creatures to the scene (depends on time and lid size) such as bugs, worms, animals, humans.
- Look at pollutants - perhaps half the class could do a regular scene and half can add pollutants at the scene for further discussion points later.

Time Check:

- If you are running short of time - don't blend brown, just use available colors of Dough Worx.

Discussion Questions:

- Talk about crops and agriculture if you wish to use this as a basis for our dependence on the soil - make the tree a fruit tree.
- Talk about the worms and their importance in the soil.
- How does the soil get polluted? How does this effect us - show with the use of crops in the diorama.

