



## What Is Soil?

- 1 Soil is made up of organic matter and mineral dust. It is a key feature of the Earth and plays a role in crucial life processes. It recycles nutrients from dead plants, animals, and animal waste back into a source of food for plants, the producers in our food chain. It also recycles gases like nitrogen and carbon dioxide by releasing them back into the atmosphere. Finally, plants, as well as many insects and animals live inside soil there.
- 2 Soil forms over very long periods of time, and the type of soil that forms depends on many factors. The ratios of dead plants, animals and animal waste, and dust and minerals from rocks differ according to the topography of the land. Climactic factors like temperature and moisture level also play an important role in the formation of soil. The three main types of soil are sand, silt, and clay.
- 3 Soil is made up of multiple layers called horizons, and different types of soil are composed of different types and numbers of horizons. There are six horizons: organic (also called hummus) (O), topsoil (A), eluviated (E), subsoil (B), parent material (C), and bedrock (R). The organic/hummus horizon is the top layer of soil in most places and is what you probably think of when you think of soil. It is in the organic layer where leaves and other dead plant matter, as well as dead animals and insects and their waste matter, fall and decompose. The O layer is very thick in some places and non-existent in others, depending on topography and climate.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Grade 7 Reading Comprehension



**DIRECTIONS:** Write a summary sentence for each paragraph.

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