



Making your own grain size indicator

In the field it can be difficult for students to come to a decision about the grain size/sizes of soil or rocks. A board (or a plastic paint scraper) with three or more grades of sandpaper stuck on, makes a simple reference tool.

The reverse of sandpaper gives the grade. (40 for coarse, 120 for medium and 240 for fine) I prefer garnet paper as the red colour covers subsequent stains more easily.



Students should feel the rock or soil with one hand and rub the sandpaper portions with the other.

Ideally, nests of sieves will reduce any soil specimen to its different size fractions but these can be expensive and cumbersome. Where soil specimens have many different sizes of grains, lightly moving the specimen in your dry hand or Petri dish, will separate them somewhat. The different portions can be estimated and size estimated by comparison to the grain size indicator.



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