

## Class Activity: Compost Investigation

### Topics

1. Compost Feedstocks
2. How different feedstocks impact compost

### Teacher's Guide

#### **Activity overview:**

This activity is meant for students to investigate different types of compost created from different feedstocks. Students will build an understanding of how different feedstocks (food waste, manure, yard waste, mulch, timber, etc.) impact compost texture and smell.

#### **Activity Instructions:**

1. **Discuss the different types of compost feedstocks**
  - a. There are many methods of composting:
    - i. Have students shout out different types of composting feedstocks.
    - ii. Ask students some guiding questions.
2. **Give students the different compost sample**
  - a. Have students investigate the compost samples.
    - i. Use the magnifying glasses to look at smaller aspects of the compost.
    - ii. Squeezing the compost in their hands to see if a clay-like shape forms (refer to guiding question).
3. **Fill out the worksheets and make inferences**
  - a. Have students write down their observations in the worksheet.
  - b. Based on their observations, have them make inferences on what type of feedstock the compost could be made out of.
4. **Reveal the feedstocks**
  - a. Reveal the types of feedstocks, and which sample they correlate to.

- b. Ask some guiding questions about why the compost texture/color/smell is a certain way due to its feedstocks.

**Guiding Questions for the activity:**

1. What are some things that can be composted?
2. How would composting different things impact the compost?
3. Do any of the compost types look familiar to you?
4. Is the compost a light brown color or a dark brown color?
5. Is there anything in the compost that sticks out to you?
6. When you squeeze the compost in your hand does it feel more airy or clay-like?
7. Is the compost more powdery or more chunky?
8. How does the compost smell? How would you describe the odor?
9. How does the texture of the vermicompost differ from the manure compost? Why?

**Materials List**

- Compost samples with different feedstocks
  - Ex. food waste pile compost
  - Ex. bokashi compost
  - Ex. manure compost
  - Ex. vermicompost
  - Ex. biochar compost
- Magnifying glasses
- Nitrile/Latex glove



# Compost Investigation



What was the compost made of before it decomposed and broke down?



	Observations:	Conclusions:
Sample #1		
Sample #2		
Sample #3		
Sample #4		