Topic: The Rock Cycle
3rd Grade

How will I encourage my students to take risks?

R

In small groups, give students time to prepare a skit, play, or other dramatic presentation on the rock cycle to be presented to the whole group. Provide clear guidelines, yet allow for freedom of choice—both in method and individual participation. Be accepting of what students offer.

I

It takes some advance planning, but NASA will ship to you actual lunar rock disk samples for educational use. Once students have viewed these samples, they can write a story of the trip the lunar samples might have taken to get from the moon to their classroom. Be creative and imaginative! For more info, search NASA Lunar and Meteorite Disk Program.

S

Use 3 different colors of stacked Starburst candy to represent a rock. Students use pressure (quite a bit!) to flatten the candy and make a sedimentary rock. With 3 new Starbursts, students use both low heat and pressure to make metamorphic rocks. Finally, use medium heat to completely melt the candies to represent igneous rocks. The full activity can be found at: lemonlimeadventures.com/edible-rock-cycle-for-kids/. Be sure to allow time for “what-ifs” and eating!

A

Read the delightful story Everybody Needs a Rock by Baylor. Take students outside on a walk and encourage them to choose their own “special” rock. Return to the classroom, circle up, and share. Discuss the unique qualities of their new “friend.” Next, have students write about their rock using an “I see, I wonder, I think” prompt.

D

Differentiation: Allow for choice, flexible small group or partner work, provide key vocabulary in students' home language, visual mapping or modeling, use ongoing formative assessment, KNOW YOUR STUDENTS!—interests, readiness, and aptitudes. What is my classroom environment like???

C

Take a field trip to The Garden of the Gods Park in Colorado Springs, CO. Park staff offers a “Geology of the Park” guided tour that is aligned to state standards and is appropriate for 3rd-6th grades. The Garden of the Gods is composed entirely of sedimentary rock. Visit their website to schedule a field trip and book early.