Ground without plants

National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards

Find an area of ground that you think is bare and carry out activity 1 to make sure.

1 ACTIVITY 1: Identifying bare ground

- Are there any plants growing on the ground? If not, you definitely have bare ground.
- If there are some plants growing on the ground, try to step through the area without standing on any plants.
- Take 7 steps in a straight line, and place your feet completely flat on the ground, with each step.
- Were you able to avoid stepping on some plants? If the answer is **yes, you have bare ground**. If the answer is **no, you do not have bare ground** – use a different flow chart to try to identify the habitat.

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2 ACTIVITY 2: Is the ground permeable? Can water soak into it?

- **Pour 1 x 500ml container of water** on to the ground, on an area the size of a pencil case, and use a stopwatch or counting ("1 elephant, 2 elephant...") to **time 1 minute**.
- Watch to see if the water disappears and soaks into the ground, if it rolls away to another place, or if it sits on the surface not going anywhere.
- Repeat the test a maximum of 2 more times, on the same small patch of ground.
- If the water **soaks** into the ground, record as **permeable**.
- If it **doesn't** soak into the ground, record as **impermeable**.

Tick the answer below that describes your ground:

☐ **The ground is permeable**

☐ **The ground is impermeable**

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3 ACTIVITY 3: Is the material natural?

Examine the material the ground is made from – is it a **natural** or **human-made** material?

☐ **Natural materials**
Soil, dirt, sand, wood decking, gravel, straw, rock, bark or wood chips

☐ **Human-made materials**
Concrete, tarmac, paving slabs, artificial grass, rubber chippings, bricks, plastic decking

If you have an area of ground that is impermeable AND you think it is made from a natural material, try this final activity.

4 ACTIVITY 4: The smudge test

- **Pour another 1 x 500ml container of water** onto the same spot where you were testing permeability.
- **Rub the surface of the ground** with your finger really hard - test an area the size of a tennis ball.
- If the ground starts to break up and your finger gets muddier the more you rub, record the ground as **bare soil**.
- Otherwise, record the ground as **rock**.

Tick the answer below that describes your ground:

☐ **Bare soil**

☐ **Rock**