

COMPOSTING

Focus Lesson: Composting

Materials:

A Handful of Dirt by Raymond Bial
 Containers (large yogurt containers)
 Soil
 Leaves
 Vegetable scraps
 Water

Time: 1 hour

*Common Core Standards: **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.7**

Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).

Thinking Skill:
Predicting
Critical thinking

Objective:

Students will understand the importance of soil and compost and how compost is made.

Connection:

Students will see how food turns into compost and how they can make their own compost. They will understand that they could make their own compost to enrich a garden of their own, and see the tangibility of food production. This also connects to the lesson on decomposition.

Explicit Instruction:

Start a discussion to elicit students' prior knowledge of soil and composition. What is soil? What makes up soil? What is composting? What goes into a composting bin? When something is decomposing naturally outside what does it become?

Read pages 25-27 in *A Handful of Dirt* by Raymond Bial.

Ask students to brainstorm what they think they would need to start composting.

Guided Practice:

Split students into groups of 4-5 and ask them to develop a plan for how they will put their materials into their container. Will they layer them? Will they shake them up?

Then hand out materials: a small container, soil, leaves, vegetable scraps and a small amount of water. Allow students to put their materials in the container based on their plan.

Independent Practice:

Have students answer the following questions individually:

- What did you put in your container?
- What did you do to the materials in the container?
- Predict how long you think it will take the materials to become soil? Explain your answer.

Reflection – Group Share:

Bring students back to whole group and have them share their predictions for how long they think it will take their compost piles to turn into soil and why.

What did they learn about composting that they did not know before? Ask them to think about what they would like to grow in their garden when their compost becomes soil?

Reading List:

A Handful of Dirt by Raymond Bial

Teacher Note: