

HOW TO IDENTIFY A ROCK

01

Describe where you found the rock

Your backyard, a river bed, part of a bigger rock (like in a bank of a river or the side of a hill)

A rock found by itself like in a river bed is *not in-situ*
A rock that is found in its original place is *in-situ*

02

Draw a picture/ take a photo of the rock

Geologists become experts at sketching – it doesn't have to be perfect – it's so you can remember what it looked like

Make sure this has a scale (that's something else in the picture so you remember how big the rock was)

03

Colour

What colour is the rock on the outside?
What colour is the rock on the inside (if you can see this)?

Some rocks are made up of specks (minerals) of many different colours and some are just one colour

04

Texture

What is the texture of the rock? i.e. smooth, rough, grains, crystals etc?

When you run your hand over the rock how does it feel? How does it look?

05

Hardness

How hard is the rock?

You can test this by scraping the rock across another rock (that you know what it is). The rock that leaves a scrape mark is the softer rock

06

Lustre

Is the surface shiny or dull?

You can look at it in the sunlight – is it sparkly or not?

07

Streak

This is the colour the rock leaves behind when you scrape it on something else – like another rock or paper

You can do this by finding a rock that is harder to the rock you are trying to identify

08

Fracture / Cleavage

How the rock breaks

Does the rock break into layers when you try to snap it in your hands?