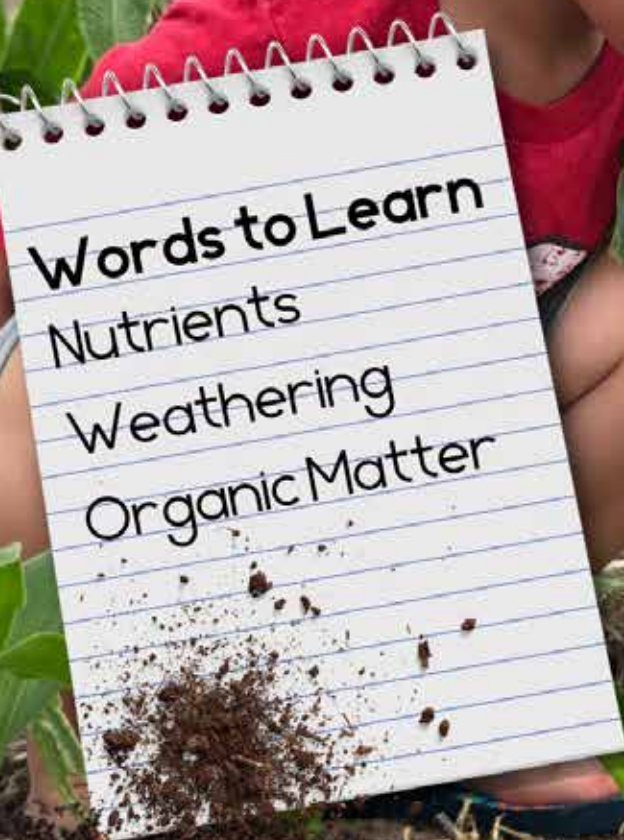


# THE MYSTERY OF

# CORN

## MYSTERY #3 The Secret of Soil



KANSAS CORN  
**STEM**

Mystery of Corn Grades K-1 Reader | Mystery #3

To grow healthy crops, farmers need good soil to plant their seeds in. What is soil made out of? What makes it good soil?



# OBSERVE AND SHARE

This soil came from a corn field. What do you notice about this soil?

- What color is it?
- Is it light or dark?
- What do you think it feels like?
- Is it moist or dry?
- What do you think it is made of?

## Farmers Love Soil!

Farmers need their farm fields to have good soil. When a corn kernel is planted in good soil it will grow into a strong and healthy corn plant.

While growing, the corn plant will get the food and **nutrients** it needs from the soil.

This farmer is looking at the seeds he planted in his soil.



# DID YOU KNOW?

Soil has been on our Earth for millions of years.  
Soil is made of two main things:  
**rocks and organic matter.**

LET'S MAKE

# SOIL



## INGREDIENTS

### WEATHERED ROCKS

Soil is mostly made of tiny rocks. Over time rocks are broken down into smaller pieces. These small pieces can become soil. When you play in a sandbox, those tiny grains of sand were once bigger rocks. Rocks break down by a process called **weathering**. The weathered rocks support the plant as it grows.

### ORGANIC MATTER

**Organic matter** is made up of many things that were once alive but now are dead. Organic matter breaks down and store carbon in the ground. Things like leaves, grass clippings or an apple core left on the ground can become organic matter in the soil. Organic matter provides food for plants.

### WEATHERED ROCKS + ORGANIC MATTER + WATER + AIR = SOIL

The weathered rocks, organic matter, along with water and air have all mixed together. When they mix together, soil is created!



# Do You Remember?

**WHAT MAKES GOOD SOIL?**  
Circle the items that make good soil.  
Put an x on the items that do not make good soil.



Use this space to draw a picture of one way rocks or organic matter can be broken into smaller pieces to become soil.

The Mystery of Corn reader series is provided by:



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