

# ROCK IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITY



Geologists are rock detectives – we find rocks and try to work out what they are.

Some rocks are familiar to us and easier to work out what they are (identify). Other rocks are not familiar to us and we must work out what they are. This is when we ask ourselves questions and use our super observation skills.



Some observations you may like to make when you find a rock, are listed in the table below. See if you can answer the questions for the next rock you find! You could even print this table out so you can refer to it again and again!



If you would like help identifying rocks in your backyard you can email your observations to us at

*[info@whitestonegeopark.nz](mailto:info@whitestonegeopark.nz)*

and we will try to help you...and a photo always helps!

# 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?

# MY ROCK IDENTIFICATION OBSERVATIONS

01 *Description of  
Location*

02 *Picture / Photo*

03 *Colour*

04 *Texture*

05 *Hardness*

06 *Lustre*

07 *Streak*

08 *Fracture /  
Cleavage*