



Get the Dirt on Where you Live

When it comes to the history of the planet, your home is a new-born baby! But the earth beneath it is ancient. Ever wonder what came before you...and your home...and your hometown...and even people?

Find out!

Here is what you do

1. Download the free app [ROCKD](#) (It was created by the University of Wisconsin, so you know it's legit).
2. Open the app to find out the following:
 - a. When in the [Quaternary](#) (geology talk for the last 2.6 million years) your little corner of the world settled into what it is today.
 - b. What types of rocks you're likely to see where you live. (That is called the [Lithology](#)).
 - c. What the layers of rock underneath you would be if you kept on digging (That is called the [Stratigraphy](#)).
3. Do a little Googling to find out what all that stuff means for you personally. For example, if your ROCKD profile says (like mine) that the [rocks under you are often made of sand](#), look up what those kinds of rocks would look like. And if [Alluvial deposits](#) are an important part of your stratigraphy (um, again, that's me over here) Google what that means.
4. Once you know that stuff, investigate!
5. Go outside and find some rocks! Take some pictures! Do they confirm what ROCKD said? If so, cool! If not, guess why that might be the case.



This sandstone from my backyard confirms just what ROCKD said it would. My house is sitting right on top of an old river bed! In fact, if I just bang one of these rocks on some bricks, it starts to fall apart. They are that soft.

6. Now, go for a walk or a drive. Look for places where you can actually see what the layers of rock look like (a safe distance from a construction site can be a good place to look, so can a road that cuts through a mountain or hill). Take more pictures! What do you see?



Wow! Can you see how the layer of rocks change as we get deeper into the hillside near my home? Each layer speaks to a different time in earth's history. And it's all there, right under your feet—a story waiting to be told.

7. Bonus extra-thinking points: Try to guess how the layers of rocks and types of rocks in your environment have affected the way people live. (For example, why might it be a problem that my Southern California home is on top of soft sandstone?)
8. Finally, go tell someone all the cool stuff you learned. After all, what is the point of learning cool stuff if you can't flaunt it?

Margaret Finnegan is the author of *We Could be Heroes* from Simon Kids. For more geology crafts and activities visit her website, MargaretFinnegan.com

