

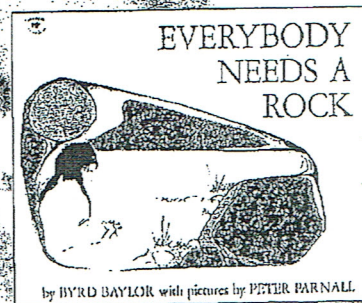
Rock Finding

This literature-based activity helps students discover the importance of making detailed observations.

By Katie Rommel-Esham and Susan D. Constable

Do you have a favorite science trade book that “speaks” to you? One of our favorites is the children’s classic, *Everybody Needs a Rock* by Byrd Baylor (1974). In this inspiring book, the author invites readers to go “rock finding,” laying out 10 rules for finding a “perfect” rock. In this way, the book encourages children to look closely, using all of their senses, whims, and personal preferences as they search for their rock. Teachers can take this idea further, using the book as a basis for an activity in which students describe the physical characteristics of various

rocks and in the process hone their observation and communication skills and learn the value of making detailed observations. We call the activity “My Secret Rock” and have used it effectively with students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades and also with preservice teachers.



Your Rock Collection

Start with a collection of similar-looking rocks (purchased at the local dollar store). For a class of 24 students (using 6 groups of 4), you would need 6 rocks for each group, for a total of 36. Sort through the rocks ahead of time and group them according to char-