

Relative Dating Lab Activity Sediment Deposits

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Group Materials:

- Sand (different sizes if available)
- Gravel (different sizes if available)
- Shell fragments
- Wide-mouth jar with a screw cap

Instructions

1. Take the glass-canning jar and add equal amounts of sand(s), gravel(s), and shell fragments (1/3 to 1/2 of the jar).
2. Fill the remainder of the jar with water.
3. Cover tightly and add electrical tape around the perimeter of the lid area to add more security.
4. Shake vigorously.
5. Allow the sediments in the jar to settle for one or more days.
6. Observe what occurs to the sediments as they are deposited.
7. Draw a labelled sedimentary profile.

Discussion

1. Identify the layers of deposition.
2. Where may depositions like this occur?
3. In what order did these layers occur (i.e. which is the oldest layer)?

Adapted from Relative Age Dating by Nancy Volk,

http://www.most.org/curriculum_project/earth_science/middle_school/prior/relative_age_dating.pdf

