

**Launch Lab****LESSON 2: 20 minutes**

What can you learn from a core sample?

Layers of Earth's crust can be studied easily when they are exposed on the side of a cliff. To learn about layers that are buried, however, scientists often drill into the ground to get a core sample. A core sample is a sample of rock and soil taken from inside Earth's upper crust.

Procedure

1. Read and complete a lab safety form.
2. Fold a blank sheet of **paper** into four equal squares. Label the squares *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*, respectively.
3. Place thin and thick layers of **different-colored salt dough** in a **bowl**.
4. To get core samples, push a **clear straw** straight down into the clay with a slight twisting motion. Slowly remove the straw.
5. Use **scissors** to snip off the end of the straw that contains the sample. Place the sample on the paper square labeled *A*. Write a description of the sample in your Science Journal.
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 to take core samples *B*, *C*, and *D* from different parts and different depths of the dough crust.

Think About This

1. What do the layers of salt dough represent?

2. How are the core samples alike? How are they different?

3. Which layers likely represent the oldest and youngest rock layers in your sample? How do you know?

4. **Key Concept** Based on your core samples, what can you infer about the materials that make up the upper part of Earth's crust?
