

Plants, Soil, and Erosion

READ ALOUD PASSAGE

Soil is broken rock plus humus, air, and water, not just dirt. Pick up a handful from a garden and look closely. You may see tiny bits of rock, scraps of old leaves, and small spaces where air and water sit. Humus, decayed organic matter, holds the water and nutrients roots use.

Roots physically hold soil in place, and plant cover softens rain before it hits the ground. A raindrop that lands on bare dirt splashes loose soil into the air. A raindrop that lands on a leaf drips down gently.

Erosion, soil or rock being worn away and carried off, happens fastest where nothing is rooted to resist it. After a heavy storm, a bare hillside often has muddy gullies cut into it. A grassy hillside right next to it may look almost the same as before. Farmers plant grass along ditches and streams for exactly this reason.

Activity 1: Word Sort Challenge

Sort the words in the box. Write each word under the right heading.

WORD BANK

grassy muddy gently drips splashes closely gully soil fastest bare
humus resist

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs

Activity 2: Sentence Scramble

These words are mixed up. Put them in order to make a sentence. Start with a capital letter and end with a period.

1. pick / up / from / handful / a / a / and / garden / closely / look

2. that / lands / a / leaf / raindrop / on / down / a / drips / gently

Activity 3: Because, But, So

Finish the sentence three ways. After because, tell why. After but, tell something different or surprising. After so, tell what happened next.

The bare hillside eroded **because**

The bare hillside eroded, **but**

The bare hillside eroded, **so**

Activity 4: Copy the Shape

Read the sentence. Notice how it is built. Then write your own sentence using the same structure.

Read the sentence:

Because roots hold soil in place, grassy hills erode slowly.

Notice how it is built:

Because _____, _____.

Start with Because and a reason. Add a comma. Then tell what happens.

Now write your own sentence the same way. You can write about anything you learned in this lesson.

Need help getting started? Try finishing this one: **Because the hillside was bare, ...**

[illegible]