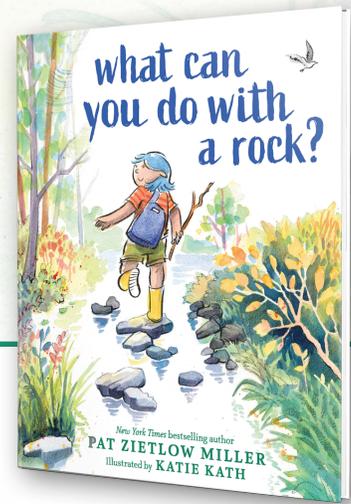


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A ROCK?

By **PAT ZIETLOW MILLER** Illustrated by **KATIE KATH**



Discussion & Activity Guide for Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4

About the Book

Rocks are simple, but the things you can do with them are endless. Rocks can build, sparkle, and tell a story. They can be memories. They can even be a little bit magic. This ode to curiosity and creative play from *New York Times* bestselling author Pat Zietlow Miller and acclaimed illustrator Katie Kath is bound to inspire.



Photo © Jason Rouse

About the Author

PAT ZIETLOW MILLER lives in Madison, Wisconsin with one wonderful husband, two delightful daughters and two pampered cats. She is the author of the picture books *Sophie's Squash*, which won the Golden Kite Award for picture book text from the SCBWI, and the *New York Times* bestseller *Be Kind*, among others. Visit her at: <https://www.patzietlowmiller.com/>



Photo © Marie Killen

About the Illustrator

KATIE KATH graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) with an MFA in illustration. She is the artist of more than fourteen picture and middle grade books. In her spare time, Katie tries to amuse her cat, plays piano, and sometimes draws silly cartoons about her life, which you can see on her Instagram. Visit her at: <https://www.ktkath.com/>

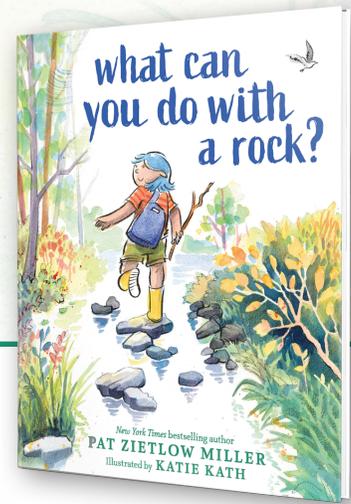
Reviews

“The story’s opening draws readers right into the world of rock appreciation...(Insert space)The child’s adventures with rocks and making friends form a visual story that complements the conversational, conspiratorial text. By the end, the story widens its scope to sweet life lessons as it turns effortlessly toward friendship and the wisdom transferable from rock discovery to friend discovery. A delightful invitation.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

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Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

The title of this book is a question, “What can you do with a rock?” Ask the class this question. How many different ideas can students come up with?

Have the class examine the front cover, the back cover, and the book’s endpapers. Based on these illustrations, what do students think this story will be about?

The main character of this story makes a new friend who also likes rocks. Have students ever made friends thanks to a hobby or an activity they like to do?

Vocabulary

As you read the book, have students raise their hands when they hear a word or phrase that is new or unfamiliar. As a class, derive the meaning from context, using a dictionary as necessary. Could the author have used other words that would have conveyed a similar meaning? Have students practice using these new words in a sentence.

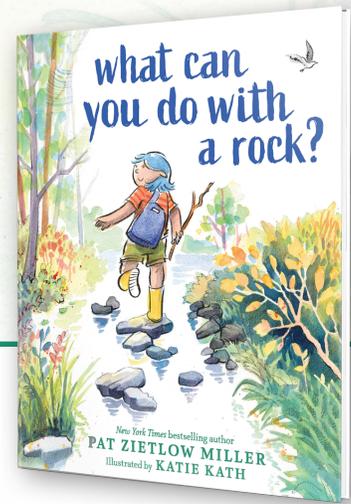
Post-Reading Questions and Activities

Pictures vs. Words

As a class, review the section, “*You Can Drop It.*” What does the text tell us about dropping a rock? How do the pictures explain the meaning of the sentence, “No one wants to get hit by a rock”? The last section of this book, “*Best of all, you can share them.*” could be a complete story on its own. Break students into groups to summarize this part of the tale. What do the words tell us and what do the pictures show us? How do the two girls meet? What happens when they both see the same rock? What do they do next? How do they end up feeling about each other? How can the reader tell? What is the theme or “big idea” of this section?

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Beginning, Middle, and End

Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. In *What Can You Do with a Rock?*, the first few pages introduce the idea of how to appreciate rocks. The middle of the book describes some things you can do with a rock. The story ends with our hero making a new friend thanks to one of the things she does with a rock—share it. But the book isn't done yet! The last pages are resources to help readers learn more about rocks. Can students identify the different parts of the book? What clues are there in the text that show students they are in a new “section?”

What We Can Do with a Rock

As a class, make a list of the different things the book says that you can do with a rock. How are these ideas set off or identified in the text? After you have compiled the list, have each student come up with a new thing to do with a rock. With the help of an adult as necessary, have students write a few lines of text describing their new “Rock-tivity” and create an illustration. Compile these into a “Classroom Edition” of *What We Can Do with a Rock* and distribute it to students and their families. You could even share it with the author and illustrator, showing them how much the book inspired the class!

Rock Groups

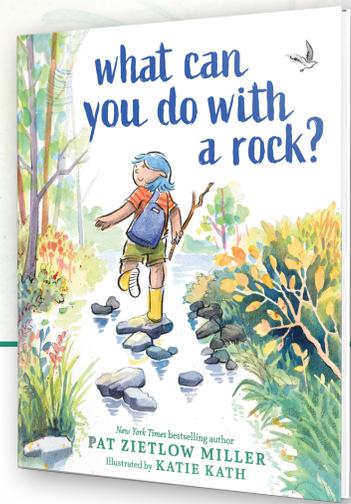
There are three main categories of minerals: igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic. Break the class into three groups and have each research one of these categories, creating a poster to display in the class. They should define the type of rock, describe how it forms, give examples, and discuss the qualities that rocks in their category share. Display the posters in class so students can refer to the information over the course of this unit.

Rockin' Research

The endpapers illustrate a variety of minerals. Have each student choose one of these as the subject of a brief research project and presentation. Working with an adult as needed, have students research their mineral and illustrate their findings with an informational poster. The posters should summarize their research, include photographs and original illustrations, and answer the following questions: What category of rock does this mineral belong to? Where can it be found in nature? What are some important uses and interesting facts about it? Using the poster as a visual aid, have students present their findings to the class. Display their posters to create a Mineral Museum.

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Rock Hounds

Have students explore their yard, street, neighborhood, or a nearby park on a quest for special rocks. Have students bring in the rocks they find and create a display of all the specimens. Label each rock with the location where it was found, when it was collected, and who found it. Have each student explain what attracted them to the rock or rocks they have brought in as their contribution.

Sorting and Grouping

Take all the rocks your class has collected. Have each student present the rock they found, tell the class about it, and place it on a display table. Next, have volunteers come forward and organize the rocks into groups. Have the rest of the class try to guess how these rocks have been organized—by color, by size, by location where they were found, or by some other factor. Did students learn anything from the ways their classmates grouped the rocks? Can they think of a way a scientist might group a rock collection? As a bonus activity, older students can create Venn diagrams illustrating groups, sub-groups, and intersections—like small rocks, white rocks, and white rocks that are small.

Call In the Experts!

Invite a science teacher, geologist, or local “rock hound” to come and be the “Visiting Expert” for a day. Have them discuss local geology and what sorts of rocks and minerals can be found in your area. Next, have them work with students to identify the rocks in the class collection. What do experts look for when studying a sample? What information about the rock will help with identification? What tools and tests can be used to help identify an unknown sample? Have students record what was learned about their rock.

Rock Carnival

What Can You Do with a Rock? shares lots of fun things you can do with rocks. There are activities like kicking a rock as you walk or seeing how many you can stack on your hand. There are craft projects, like painting rocks, making jewelry, creating mosaics—there are so many options! Hold a Rock Carnival, with stations where students can try out the different activities mentioned in the book. You could even have a collection to sort, and a few Mystery Rocks that students could use their newfound expertise to identify!

To continue the class's study of rocks, be sure to review the activities and resources at the end of this book, including other books about rocks for younger readers.