

# A Taste of Rock Classification

by M. Rynish

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## Purpose:

1. To have students examine and observe differences between the three rock types ([sedimentary](#), [igneous](#), and [metamorphic](#)).
2. To have students reinforce their knowledge of what classifies rocks into the three rock types.
3. To have students develop reasons for classifying sample materials into the three rock types.
4. To have students analyze reasons for classifying sample materials and form a consensus of their observations.

## Materials:

1. Variety of store bought cookies bagged for distribution for each group of students (10 different types would be a minimum). When choosing cookies, you will want to consider cost, unusual characteristics, processes by which cookies were made and the number of cookies in the package.
2. Napkins or paper towels for each group of students
3. Optional: New York State Earth Science Reference Table

## Directions:

Divide the cookies into individual packages for distributing to each group. Have student groups organize themselves with three paper towels or napkins and the prepared package of cookies. Students should label each napkin with one of the rock types (sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous.) Students should be directed to observe and examine each cookie. They should decide which classification of rock that each cookie best exemplifies. As the group makes a decision, they should take note of what characteristic or characteristics led to their decision.

Before students eat their samples, the teacher needs to check their results, question their decision and pose other possibilities. The teacher may have had specific ideas what each cookie best represented when selecting and purchasing, however, it should be obvious that there is no set key to this activity. The most important outcome to this activity is in the analysis and discussion that this activity presents.

## Web sites:

- [Photos of different rock types](#)
- [Another lab exercise, a bit different](#)
- [The three rock types, linked by the rock cycle](#)

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[Science labs web page](#)

[Pedagogy web page](#)

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