

UNIT 5: THE SOLID EARTH

ROCKS AND DICHOTOMIC KEY.

Dear language assistant,

This is a lesson in the lab watching rocks. Our first aim is **to learn to describe rocks** and to answer this question “What does it look like? It looks like...” (The verb “look like” sounds strange to the students because they only know “look = mirar”). You can take a rock in your hand to explain this:

- What **colour** is it? Review some colours and show them how to use intermediate colours, colours with the suffix –ish, etc. Dark red or light red.
- **Shape**: irregular, long...
- What is it made? It is made of layers or sheets, made of sand, made of ...
- Is it **shiny or dull**?
- Is it **soft or hard**? It depends on the way it is scratched.
- Does it have **holes**? Does it have **fossils**?

Scientists use a special system to find out the name of a rock, a mineral, a plant or an animal. This system is called **dichotomic key** (clave dicotómica) and you just have to choose between two options several times to get the right name. This is an example to learn about dichotomic key (or simply “key”). Imagine you can’t remember a teacher’s name but you’ve got a “key”. (The following “key” will be on the board).

1a It is a man.....	2
1b It is a woman.....	6
2a He wears glasses.....	Pablo
2b He doesn't wear glasses.....	3
3a He was born in Ubrique.....	4
3b He wasn't born in Ubrique.....	5
4a He is a very good painter.....	Rafael
4b He is not a painter.....	Diego
5a He is very good at Maths.....	Luis
5b He is not so good at Maths.....	Gabriel
6a She wears glasses.....	7
6b She doesn't wear glasses.....	8
7a She has got black hair.....	Sonia
7b She hasn't got black hair.....	Paqui
8a She teaches Spanish	Pepi Laura/Esther
8b She teaches a foreign language.....	9
9a She teaches French.....	Rosa
9b She teaches English.....	10
10a Her hair is curly.....	11
10b Her hair isn't curly.....	Josefina

11a She is from Holland.....	Nora
11b She is not from Holland.....	Margari

If you have understood how “key” works you will be able **to find out the names of ten rocks**. Students work in groups using the key below and then you can give the right answers: A is pink granite, B is limestone, C is sandstone, D is coal, E is gypsum, F is schist, G is slate, H is basalt, I is grey granite and J is marble.

DICHOTOMIC KEY OF ROCKS

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1a It is made of sheets..... | Go to 2 |
| 1b It isn't made of sheets..... | Go to 3 |
| 2a It hasn't got any shiny mineral..... | Slate/Pizarra. |
| 2b It has got shiny minerals and the rock is shiny..... | Schist/Esquisto |
| 3a It has got little holes..... | Basalt/Basalto |
| 3b It hasn't got little holes..... | Go to 4 |
| 4a It is made up of grains of sand..... | Sandstone/Arenisca |
| 4b It isn't made up of grains of sand..... | Go to 5 |
| 5a Its colour is white, beige or any light colour..... | Go to 6 |
| 5b Other colours..... | Go to 8 |
| 6a It often contains fossils..... | Limestone/Caliza |
| 6b It doesn't contains fossils..... | Go to 7 |
| 7a Very soft. It can be scratched with a fingernail..... | Gypsum/Yeso |
| 7b It can't be scratched with a fingernail..... | Marble/Mármol |
| 8a It contains pink minerals..... | Pink granite/Gran. rosa |
| 8b Without pink minerals..... | Go to 9 |
| 9a Completely black rocks..... | Coal/Carbón |
| 9b It contains black minerals and light coloured minerals..... | Grey granite/Gr. Gris |

If there is some time left, the students can **write down a description** with the characteristics of each rock

Thank you

DICHOTOMIC KEY OF ROCKS

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1a It is made of sheets..... | Go to 2 |
| 1b It isn't made of sheets..... | Go to 3 |
| 2a It hasn't got any shiny mineral..... | Slate/Pizarra. |
| 2b It has got shiny minerals and the rock is shiny..... | Schist/Esquisto |
| 3a It has got little holes..... | Basalt/Basalto |
| 3b It hasn't got little holes..... | Go to 4 |
| 4a It is made up of grains of sand..... | Sandstone/Arenisca |
| 4b It isn't made up of grains of sand..... | Go to 5 |
| 5a Its colour is white, beige or any light colour..... | Go to 6 |
| 5b Other colours..... | Go to 8 |
| 6a It often contains fossils..... | Limestone/Caliza |
| 6b It doesn't contain fossils..... | Go to 7 |
| 7a Very soft. It can be scratched with a fingernail..... | Gypsum/Yeso |
| 7b It can't be scratched with a fingernail..... | Marble/Mármol |
| 8a It contains pink minerals..... | Pink granite/Gran. rosa |
| 8b Without pink minerals..... | Go to 9 |
| 9a Completely black rocks..... | Coal/Carbón |
| 9b It contains black minerals and light coloured minerals..... | Grey granite/Gr. Gris |

Write down the description of each rock:
