



Soils from rocks

Soils are made from rocks, but they are not hard like rocks.

Rocks are tough materials, but as they break down into smaller pieces, they make a thin layer on the surface. This is called a soil.

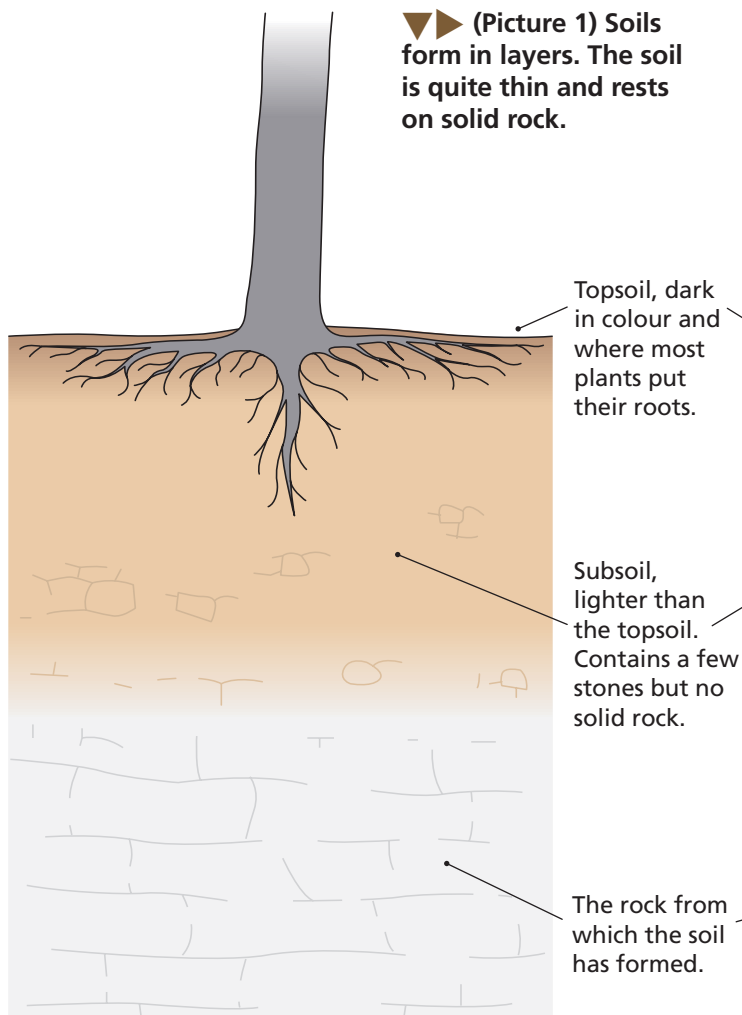
What is a soil made of?

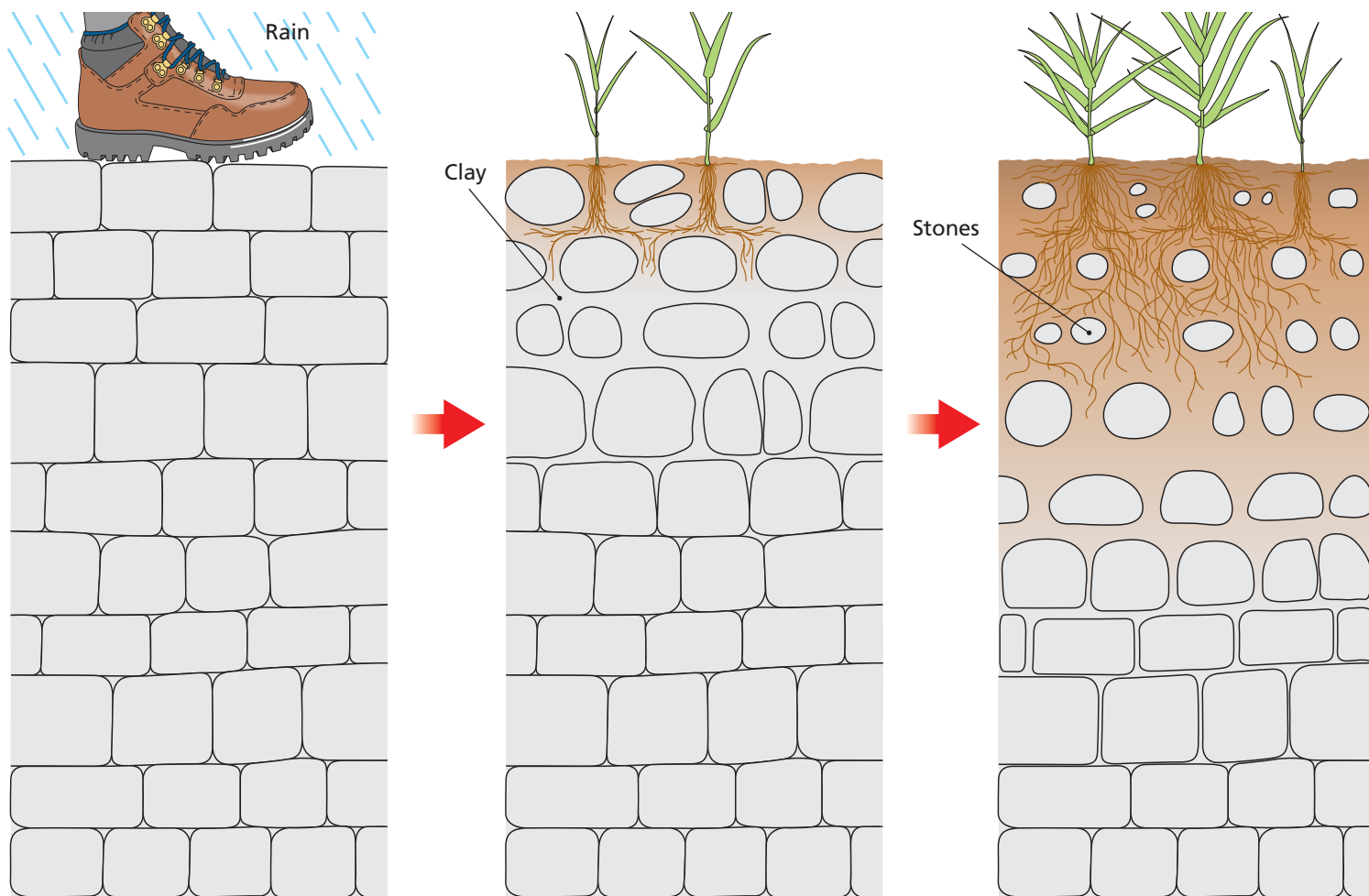
A soil is a mixture of materials. It contains mostly fine pieces of rock such as clay and sand. It may also contain a few stones.

But if this was all there was, it would not be a soil. A soil also contains plant and animal remains. So a soil is a mixture of rock, and plant and animal remains.

Soil layers

Soils form in layers (Picture 1).





▲ (Picture 2) Rain falling onto rock soaks in and begins to destroy it. This leaves sand and clay behind. The stones are the remains of the original rock.

The top layer of the soil is called the **TOPSOIL**. It is dark in colour. Here you find clay, sand and plant roots.

Below the topsoil is a lighter layer. This is the **SUBSOIL**. Few plant roots are found here. The subsoil rests on the solid rock.

How soils form

Soils form as rainwater causes the rock to break up (Picture 2).

You can think of the way soil is made from rock by comparing the way

brown rust forms on a nail. As the nail is attacked by the weather, it becomes soft and flaky. When rock is attacked by the weather, it too becomes soft and loose.

Rocks, like nails, contain iron and so they also turn brown when breaking up into soils as a result of attacks by the weather.

Summary

- Soils form in layers.
- Soils form above rocks.
- Soils are produced when rocks are attacked by the weather.