

Gemstones



Idaho is known as the "Gem State" because it contains 72 different kinds of precious and semi-precious stones. Idaho gems can be found throughout the state, particularly in mining sites and stream beds. The only other location on the planet which has a greater variety of gems is Africa. Old mine dumps where weathering and erosion have exposed mineral specimens are good collecting spots.

Possible topics of discussion:

- Rock cycle, plate tectonics
- Mineral crystallisation
- What are the requirements for gemstones to form? How do they rise to the surface?
- Are certain gemstones always found near a specific type landform?

Additional Resources:

- Idaho State University Gemstones [Digital Atlas](#)
- PBS Video [The Gem State](#)

Performance Standards

2 nd Grade	4 th Grade	Middle School	High School
2-ESS-1.1. Use information from several sources to provide evidence that Earth events can occur quickly or slowly.	4-ESS-1.1. Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers for changes in a landscape over time to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.	MS-ESS-2.3. Analyze and interpret data on the distribution of fossils and rocks, continental shapes, and seafloor structures to provide evidence of the past plate motions.	HS-ESS-2.1. Develop a model to illustrate how Earth's internal and surface processes operate at different spatial and temporal scales to form continental and ocean-floor features.



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