

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## SEDIMENTARY ROCK LAB

These are my favorite rocks and hopefully I can pass on my feelings about them to you. In "*Galileo was Right*" the geologist Silver pushed the importance of **context**. Without context a rock is a rock. *With* context a rock tells a story. With igneous rocks the story is simple - molten material cools and forms a rock. The only exciting part is if it cools quickly or slowly, and if the mineral are heavy or light. Sedimentary rocks give you the story of what was happening on the surface of the planet, rather than deep beneath. What type of materials were being broken down and moved? What lived there? What did *there* actually look like? It doesn't get any better! One of my favorite quotes about how a sedimentary geologists sees the rock comes from William Northdurft's great book *The Lost Dinosaurs of Egypt*. In it geologists are trying to find the site where a geologist almost 100 years before had found dinosaur bones. One of the geologists is looking at the sandstone in front of him and says " . . . in my mind's eye I could see the Tethys Sea stretching away from me toward the north. My feet would have been in the shallows along the beach. I could even tell that the water would have been lapping at my feet very gently. There would have been no crashing surf, or any significant current at all, the fine-grained sand would not have ended up here beneath my feet. This would have been a quiet, peaceful spot by the sea." Now that's context! Slowly go around and look at these samples. There's no rush. Record the name of the sample, the sediment that formed it, where was the sediment deposited, and your own comments. The comment should be something meaningful - not "cool." Once again - enjoy!

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