This assessment is designed to provide information about reading comprehension skills. It contains a reading passage with multiple choice, short answer, and constructed response items. Read the passage and then mark the bubble with the correct answer on the multiple choice items. Write responses to the short answer and constructed response items in the box provided.

Refer back to the passage as necessary. You may mark up the passage in any way that is helpful in answering the items.
What's the Scoop on Soil?

It's easy to forget about soil. You have to look down on the ground to see it. Even then, soil may not seem to do very much. But there's more to soil than you might think. It isn't just dirt that gets on your shoes.

Trees and plants need soil to grow. Very few fruits, vegetables, and grains would live without it. Many animals need soil, too. They eat the plants that grow in it. Some animals even live in the soil. Can you imagine a world without soil?

Most soil comes from rocks. Over many years, weather causes rocks to break apart. The pieces get smaller and smaller as time goes on. Soil forms when bits of rock mix with things like dead leaves and dead bugs.

Not all soil is the same. Soil comes in many colors. Some soil looks and feels different from other soil. The color and feel of soil often changes as you dig deeper into the ground. You can learn a lot by seeing and touching soil. In a way, soil is like a secret decoder.

The color of soil can sometimes tell you where you are. For example, red soil can be found in Arizona. Gray soil can be found in Nevada. Black soil can be found in Texas. Water also affects the color of soil. Wet soil is usually darker than dry soil.

The feel of soil can tell you about its ingredients. Soil contains different amounts of sand, silt, and clay. Soil in a forest might be gritty, which means more sand. Soil in a meadow might be smooth, which means more silt. Soil in a garden might be sticky, which means more clay.

Did you know that squeezing soil can tell you about the weather? If soil crumbles between your fingers, then the weather has probably been dry. If soil is wet and sticky—yuck!—then it might have rained not too long ago.
Looking closely at soil can tell you about the weather. Soil that is wet and sticky is called mud. Some people don't like to get mud on them. But if someone offers you mud pie, you might first want to find out how it was made. Some mud pies are made by playing with water and soil. But the dessert called mud pie is actually made of chocolate! Yum!
(Source: NASA website)

1 Which word has an ending that means “more”?
   A weather
   B animals
   C closely
   D deeper

2 Which word in this passage means the same as soil?
   A rock
   B dirt
   C shoe
   D plant

3 A decoder is something that
   A helps you understand something.
   B makes something new.
   C cleans something old.
   D turns a thing into something different.
4 What is the meaning of the word ingredients? Give clues from the passage that helped you understand the meaning.

5 According to the passage, which animal lives in the soil?

- A  a bird
- B  a spider
- C  a worm
- D  a mouse

6 What belongs in the empty box?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feel of soil</th>
<th>Contains more....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gritty</td>
<td>sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smooth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What belongs in the empty box?

- A  sticky
- B  clay
- C  rock
- D  silt
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color of Soil in Arizona</th>
<th>Color of Soil in Nevada</th>
<th>Color of Soil in Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What should go in box (2)?

- A  white
- B  red
- C  gray
- D  black
The passage says, “You can learn a lot from seeing and touching soil.”

a. Name one thing you can tell by seeing soil.

b. Name one thing you can learn by touching it.
9 What is the main idea of this passage?

A Soil is more interesting than it seems.
B You need soil to grow plants.
C Soil gets all over your shoes.
D There are different kinds of soil.

10 Which is another good title for this passage?

A “Where Soil Comes From”
B “Facts About Soil”
C “Mud Pie!”
D “Growing Things in Soil”

11 In a world without soil, there would be

A more animals.
B no rocks.
C no rain.
D few plants.

12 Wet soil is most likely to be

A sandy.
B red.
C warm.
D dark.

13 Dry weather makes soil

A good for plants.
B crumbly.
C smaller.
D look like clay.

14 The passage says the dessert called “mud pie” is made of

A chocolate.
B fruits.
C brown sugar.
D eggs.
What causes soil to form? Use details from the passage.