



STEM Challenge: Fossils Story Book Science at Home Activity

What you need

- Play-Doh, clay, or other material with a similar texture
- Materials to leave traces in Play-Doh, like models or toys of ancient organisms

Preparation

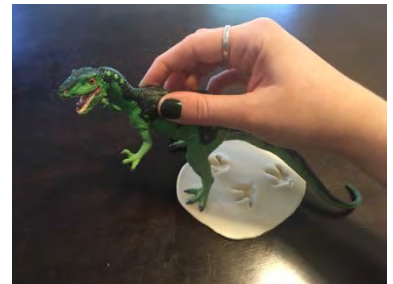
Follow the instructions to model a trace fossil.



Step 1. Gather materials.



Step 2. Create an impression of the model or toy in clay.



What to do

Use the materials to create a trace fossil that indicates the activity of an ancient organism.

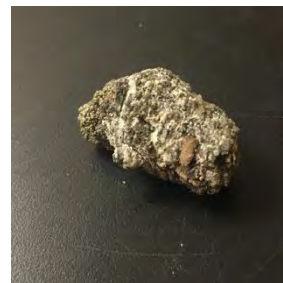
What is happening?

Fossils are the remains of organisms that lived during a past geological age – a long, long time ago! Fossils are formed through a special process after the living organism from a past geological age dies. After the organism dies, it is buried in sediment, or tiny bits of rocks. Over time, the sediment hardens, and the hard bits of the organism that were buried are replaced by minerals. This process takes a long time, but it creates a fossil!

Fossils fall into one of two categories and can represent many different organisms: animals, plants, fungi, and more! These two categories are body fossils and trace fossils. Body fossils are parts of organisms that come directly from the body. Bones, claws, and teeth are all examples of body fossils! Trace fossils are fossils that indicate the activity of an organism. One example of a trace fossil is a footprint. An organism made the footprint, but it is not a part of its body.



Examples of body fossils: marine invertebrates, or animals without a backbone that lived in the ocean!



Examples of trace fossils: coprolite, or fossilized poo, and footprints!