

Try This at Home



Create your own Fossil

Mold fossils are imprints left behind in what was once a soft substance. When the substance hardens, it will keep the shape and texture of the plant or animal.

Materials: shells, leaves, feathers, ferns, sticks, or chicken bones; clay, Plaster of Paris or Model Magic

1. Select several items you want to make fossils of. You might choose shells, leaves, feathers, ferns, sticks, or chicken bones.
2. Flatten the clay, and press each object firmly into the clay or plaster. Remove the object and you will see the imprint of your fossil. For a permanent fossil, grease a shallow pan and pour a layer of Plaster of Paris in the bottom of the pan. Press the objects in to the plaster and remove them. Allow plaster to dry over night. You can also use model magic to create permanent mold fossils.

Cast Fossils are created when an imprint is made and then filled in by a substance which then hardens.

Materials: shells, leaves, feathers, ferns, sticks, or chicken bones; clay, Plaster of Paris, cooking spray

1. Make a mold fossil in clay using the instructions above.
2. Coat the mold fossil with cooking spray. Prepare Plaster of Paris mixture and pour into the mold. Allow the plaster to dry overnight.
3. Remove the clay the next day and you will have a cast of your fossil.

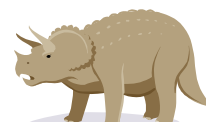
Trace Form Fossils are created when an animal becomes trapped in ice or tree resin (amber).

Materials: small objects such as plastic dinosaurs, insects or other toys; bottle cap or small receptacle, clear nail polish

1. Choose an "animal" that you would like to be fossilized. You may use small plastic dinosaurs or insects or other objects.
2. Place the object in a bottle cap or some other small receptacle. Apply several layers of clear nail polish to the object until it becomes "trapped" in "amber".



Design a Dinosaur



Thousands and thousands of species of dinosaurs lived on Earth for almost 200 million years. Many left behind no fossil evidence so we still don't know about many of the dinosaurs that lived during that time. Use your imagination to design a dinosaur that could have lived in the Paleozoic Era. First decide some things about your dinosaur, like how we walked, what he ate, and how he lived so your picture matches up with his lifestyle. Then print out the "My Dinosaur" page and draw your dinosaur and the place in which he lives.

Things to Decide:

1. Was your dinosaur a **carnivore** (meat eater) or an **herbivore** (plant eater)?
 - a. What kind of teeth did he have?
 - b. If he was a carnivore, did he have any claws, spikes or other features to take down prey? If he was an herbivore, did he have any features like a long neck or a tongue to help him reach his food?
2. Was he a **quadruped** (walked on four legs) or a **biped** (walked on two legs)?
3. What is the **size** of your dinosaur?
 - a. If he is small, he can probably move faster and hide more easily.
 - b. If he is large, he will need to eat a lot, but may be quite strong and less vulnerable to attack.
4. In what kind of **habitat** did your dinosaur live?
 - a. Did your dinosaur live on land, in the water, or both?
 - b. Could he fly or swim?
 - c. Did your dinosaur live in a cold, warm, or temperate **climate**?
 - i. Does your dinosaur have any features to help him stay warm, like fur, or cool, like small ears?
 - d. Was the land rocky and dry or damp and filled with many plants? Does he live near water?
5. Did your dinosaur live **alone** or in a **group**?
 - a. Does your dinosaur have any **special features** to help him survive?
 - b. Did his **skin** protect him in some way, such as being armored, scaly, hairy or furry?
 - c. Does he have **feathers** to help him fly or **webbing** on his hands or feet to help with swimming?
 - d. Does he have **horns, tusks, or spikes** that he uses for attack or self defense?



Draw your Dinosaur

Include the habitat in which your dinosaur lives.