

Prehistoric Life Guided Tour Pre-Visit

What is a Fossil?

Grade	Suggested Time	NGSS Connections
3-5	45 minutes	<p>3-LS4-1: Analyze and interpret data from fossils to provide evidence of the organisms and the environments in which they lived long ago.</p> <p>4-ESS1-1: Identify evidence from patterns in rock formations and fossils in rock layers to support an explanation for changes in a landscape over time.</p>

Learning Outcome

Students will be able to define what a fossil is, as well as identify different types of fossils, how fossils are a result of geologic processes, as well as gain a greater knowledge of what exactly paleontology is.

Materials Needed

What is a Fossil? Webquest worksheet (included in this lesson)

Background and Key Vocabulary

A fossil is some type of evidence that an ancient, extinct organism has (unintentionally) left behind. A body fossil is a part of an organism's body that was left behind (skull, teeth, etc). A trace fossil is an imprint of a characteristic of an organism (footprint, skin imprint, etc). Paleontology is the study of ancient life.

Activity

1. Begin an open discussion amongst the class. Inquire the students on their prior knowledge of fossils and paleontology.
2. Present them with the webquest. Review the instructions with the class.
3. Allow for students to complete the webquest.

Lesson adapted from Marybelle Espin (link): <http://betterlesson.com/lesson/638575/fossil-webquest>

What is a Fossil? Webquest

As you visit each site, answer the research questions using the information you read, heard or saw.

Have fun as you take a journey through the world of fossils!

- Watch the video, answer the questions in complete sentences:

[http://www.amnh.org/explore/amnh.tv/\(watch\)/dinosaurs-explained/what-is-a-fossil/\(category\)/1332](http://www.amnh.org/explore/amnh.tv/(watch)/dinosaurs-explained/what-is-a-fossil/(category)/1332)

1. What is a fossil?

2. How old does a trace have to be in order to be called a fossil?

- Visit the webpage, answer the questions in complete sentences:

<http://idahoptv.org/dialogue4kids/season6/fossils/facts.cfm>

3. How many kinds of fossils are there and what are they called?

4. What are body fossils?

5. What are trace fossils?

6. What type of fossil is this tooth?



7. What type of fossil is this skin?



8. What type of fossil is this footprint?



9. What type of fossil is this skull?



- Visit the webpage, answer the questions in complete sentences:

<http://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/paleontology/?fid=29578>

10. What is paleontology?

11. Why does this website claim that “the fossil record is like a big jigsaw puzzle, with most of the pieces missing?”
