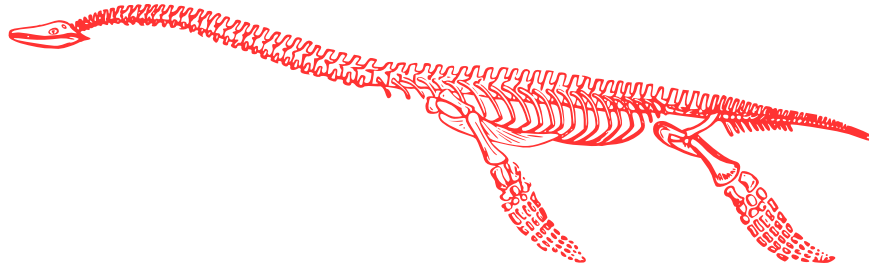




# FABRICATED FOSSILS



Some types of plants and animals that once lived on Earth can no longer be found anywhere, but we know they existed based on the fossils they left behind. Found in rocks, fossils provide evidence about the types of organisms that lived long ago, and about the environments they lived in.

There are two main types of fossils: body fossils and trace fossils. **Body fossils** are the most common type of fossil. They're created when sediment covers the organism and the hard parts, like teeth, bones, or shells remain. **Trace fossils** are formed when a plant or animal dies and is covered by sediment like sand or mud. Over time the organism breaks down, but the imprint gets left behind.

## THE GOAL:

Create three trace fossils that represent a marine life organism, a plant organism, and a land organism.

## WHAT YOU NEED:

- Baking dish, shoe box, large bowl, or other container
- Spoon or craft stick for stirring
- 3 objects to make imprints. Examples: Toy animals, seashells, pinecones, leaves, rocks, or other items found in nature
- Sediment: You can use Plaster of Paris and water, or follow the recipe below.

**DIY Sediment Recipe:** Mix the following ingredients and allow the mixture to dry overnight:

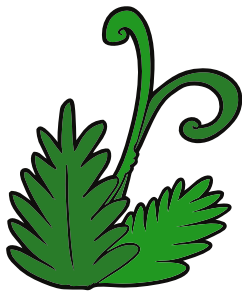
- 1 cup used coffee grounds
- ½ cup cold coffee
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt





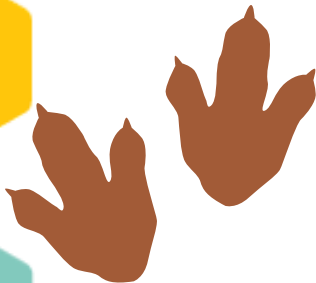
# FABRICATED FOSSILS

## TRY THIS:



- Mix the sediment according to the recipe above or according to Plaster of Paris directions. Spread it out evenly in the container so that it has a flat surface.
- Make a trace fossil by pressing one of your objects into the surface of the sediment mixture. Make at least 3 different types of fossils. Can you make a fossil of a marine, plant, and land organism? What similarities and differences do you notice about the fossils? Is it easy to recognize what your fossils are? If not, what can you do to make a more clear imprint?
- Share your fossils with a friend or family member. Can they guess what organism made each fossil?
- Try making a body fossil by burying a hard object in the sediment and letting the sediment harden. Then dig the object out like an archaeologist. Which type of fossil is easier to create-- body fossils or trace fossils?

## MORE TO EXPLORE



- Learn more about fossils, dinosaurs, and prehistoric life: <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/dinosaurs-and-prehistoric-life/fossils/>
- How well do you know fossil facts from fossil falsehoods? Take a quiz to find out: <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/quiz/dinosaurs-and-prehistoric-life/true-or-false-take-fossil-quiz/>
- Take a visit to the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the David H. Koch Hall of Fossils - Deep Time <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/exhibits/david-h-koch-hall-fossils-deep-time>
- Look at a picture of a fossilized footprint. Based on the footprint, draw a picture of the type of animal you think made the print. What does it look like? What does it eat? What type of environment does it live in? Give your animal a name and write a story about it.





# FABRICATED FOSSILS

## STANDARDS

This activity aligns with the following Oklahoma Academic Standards:

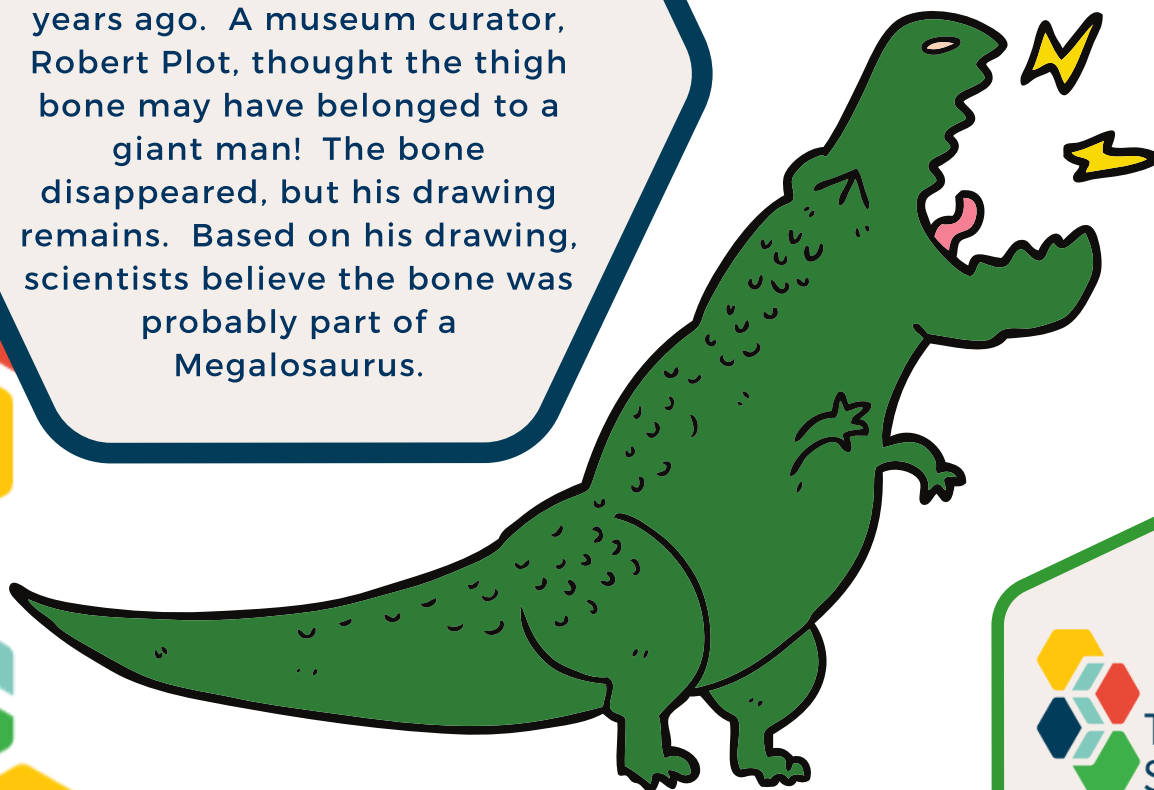
- 3rd Grade Science 3-LS4-1 Biological Unity and Diversity

## DID YOU KNOW?

The first dinosaur bone may have been discovered over 300 years ago. A museum curator, Robert Plot, thought the thigh bone may have belonged to a giant man! The bone disappeared, but his drawing remains. Based on his drawing, scientists believe the bone was probably part of a Megalosaurus.

## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

- **Discovering Fossils (Excavation Exploration)** by Jessie Alkire
- **Dinosaur Bones: And What They Tell Us** by Ron Colson



Tulsa Regional  
STEM Alliance

