

# Mini Fossil Dig

Explore the science of fossils and have fun digging for a mystery animal!

## Make Your Own Fossil Dig:

Materials Needed: 6 tablespoons sand, 2 tablespoons plaster of Paris\*, 1.5 tablespoons water, disposable paper cup or shallow plastic container, small plastic animal toy, popsicle stick or other mixing tool.

\*For a more crumbly texture, add more sand. For a more challenging dig, add more plaster of Paris.

Preparation: Mix plaster of Paris and sand in your container, and stir to combine. Add water and stir until thoroughly mixed. Hide a small plastic animal toy and cover completely. Press with your fingers to compact the mixture. Let dry for 24 to 48 hours. When your mini fossil dig is completely dry, use scissors to cut open the cup and carefully unmold.

## Excavate Your Dig:

Materials Needed: Prepared fossil dig, age-appropriate digging tools (plastic silverware, chopstick, paintbrush, old toothbrush, screwdriver, nail and hammer, etc).

Use the tools you gathered to uncover your "fossil". Experiment with different tools and techniques. Remember that fossils can be fragile, so be gentle! What did you find? Discuss what kind of animal you found!



If you find a real fossil while exploring outside, share it with a museum expert to find out more about it. Each fossil tells a story. Fossils found all over the world offer a picture of the evolution of life on Earth!

# What is a Fossil?

A fossil is any evidence of a once-living organism. Specimens are usually considered to be fossils if they are over 10,000 years old.

**Body fossils** include any part of the actual animal or plant, such as bones,