

Fossils and our Past

3rd Grade

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References: Columbus Public Schools 3rd grade science curriculum guide

Benchmarks:

LS-4: Use examples to explain that extinct organisms may resemble organisms that are alive today.

Objectives:

Students should be able to understand that some extinct organisms resemble organisms that are alive today.

Materials

- Magic School Bus book/video on Fossils
- Lesson Vocabulary
 - Fossils
 - Extinct
 - Organisms
 - Cast Fossil
 - Mold Fossil
 - Beneficial
 - Evolution
 - Paleontologists
 - Sedimentary rock
 - Imprint
- Play-dough or clay
- Tag board
- Shells
- Rocks
- Feathers
- Leaves
- Plastic fish
- Newspaper
- Stapler
- Scissors
- 5 pound box of plaster of paris
- A big bowl
- A wooden spoon
- Dixie cups (dental size)

Initial Observation/Demonstration:

Discuss fossils briefly and the types of scientists who use fossils. Let the students watch the Magic School Bus video about fossils.

Procedure:

Day 2

1. Pass out a small to medium size ball of clay to each student, have someone else pass out a piece of tag board to each student. Instruct each student to roll their clay into a tight ball.
2. Have students cut off the end piece of their tag board and staple the ends to make a circle.
3. Next they need to flatten out their clay ball to about an inch thick. Pass out objects for each child to make an imprint of in their clay.
4. Before they make their imprint have them insert their tag board circle around the edges of the clay. Now they are ready to make an imprint. Have them press their object firmly into the clay and carefully remove without disturbing their impression.
5. It is not a good idea to have students work with plaster of paris so after students have gone for the day mix plaster of paris and pour into their molds. (To make the platter of paris come out more easily spray the imprint with cooking spray first!)
6. The next day when students come in create a chart about fossils and where and how students think they were made. Next discuss how scientists, paleontologists, use fossils to interpret the past.
7. After reviewing your chart allow students to go find their fossils. They can “discover” their fossils by removing the tag-board ring and the clay. Allow them five to ten minutes to examine their fossil and to share with their friend. After all, that is what real scientists do!

Discussion/Summary:

Day 3

Discuss the students’ activities of the previous day and review the vocabulary words of the fossil unit. Allow the students to further discuss their own fossils and how they may have been caused.

Revised Model:

Revised version of model students devise

Procedure:

Further activity proving/disproving/revising new model

Discussion/Summary:

Continuing discussion or summary of lesson objectives