

LESSON 4:

FOSSIL FINDERS

SUPPLIES

TEACHER BRINGS

- Dry Bagged Rice (5 lb)

FOLDER

- Fossil Finder Handout (5)

MAIN BIN

- Trays (5)
- Plastic Cups (20)
- Paint Brushes (20)
- Fossil Figures (100)
- Spoons (20)

OBJECTIVES

- Understand what a fossil is and how it's formed.
- Explain how fossils help us learn about dinosaurs.
- Participate in a simulated fossil dig to uncover and identify "fossils."

INTRODUCTION

🕒 2-3 min

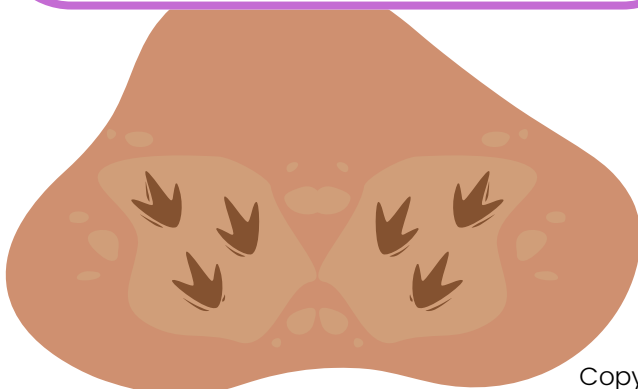
Today, we're taking a trip to the past as we learn objects from long, long ago – dinosaur fossils! Dinosaurs lived millions of years ago long before humans even existed! When their species no longer walked the Earth they left behind what we humans call fossils. A fossil is what's left behind when a plant or animal, like a dinosaur, dies and becomes buried under dirt and rocks for a very, very long time. The oldest confirmed dinosaur fossil is about 231 million years old! Over time, the bones or shapes of these animals turn into rock! So when scientists, or paleontologist, dig up dinosaur bones, they're really finding fossils – rock shapes that show us what dinosaurs looked like and how they lived.

Today, we're going to look at some fossils, talk about how they're made, and even make our own fossil art! Ready to explore the past?"


HOOK

🕒 3 min

Hidden deep, deep in the ground are clues from the past. Clues left behind by real dinosaurs! Today, we're going to go on a fossil hunt – just like real paleontologist – to discover how we know dinosaurs were here, even though we've never seen one alive! A paleontologist is a scientist who studies fossils to learn about life from a long time ago Things like dinosaur bones, ancient plants and shells and sea creatures are discovered and studied by paleontologist!




DISCUSSION

 3-5 min

Discuss with students:

Today, you are going to become paleontologists! Can you tell me what a paleontologist does? Paleontologists are scientists who dig up fossils to learn about ancient animals like dinosaurs.


ACTIVITY

 30-35 min

1. Place one tray per 4 students. Students will work in groups.
2. Fill each tray or bin halfway with dry rice (~2.5 cups)
3. Bury 20 small "fossil" objects in each tray, spreading them out and covering them with rice.
4. Distribute one brush and spoon to each student.
5. Provide a small collection cup for each child to place their found fossils.
6. Allow students to begin their fossil dig! Remind students that fossils are very delicate and they should carefully dig (with their spoon) and brush (with their paint brush) the fossil to keep it as intact as possible for further research.
7. While students are working, discuss the dino facts on the next page and pass around the fossil finder handout. Ask students if they can identify any dinosaur fossils!
8. If all fossils are found, allow student to bury their fossils and dig again!



DINO FACTS

 5-10 min

TYRANNOSAURUS REX (T. REX)

- T. Rex was huge! Some as long as a school bus!
- It had sharp teeth and tiny arms.
- T. Rex was a meat-eater (carnivore) and could roar really loud (we think!).

TRICERATOPS

- Triceratops had three big horns on its face and a bony frill behind its head.
- It was a plant-eater and used its horns to protect itself from predators like T. Rex!
- Triceratops walked on four strong legs.

BRACHIOSAURUS

- Brachiosaurus had a very long neck, which helped it eat leaves from tall trees.
- It was gentle and walked on four big legs – kind of like a giant giraffe!
- It was a plant-eater (herbivore).

STEGOSAURUS

- Stegosaurus had big, bony plates along its back and spikes on its tail.
- It used its tail spikes to stay safe from other dinosaurs.
- It had a small brain but a big body – and it only ate plants.

VELOCIRAPTOR

- Velociraptors were small and fast – they could run super quickly!
- They had sharp claws and were very smart hunters.
- Scientists think they may have had feathers, like birds!

ANKYLOSAURUS

- Ankylosaurus was covered in thick, bumpy armor all over its body to protect it from predators.
- It had a big club at the end of its tail that it could swing like a hammer!
- It was a plant-eater and walked on four sturdy legs.



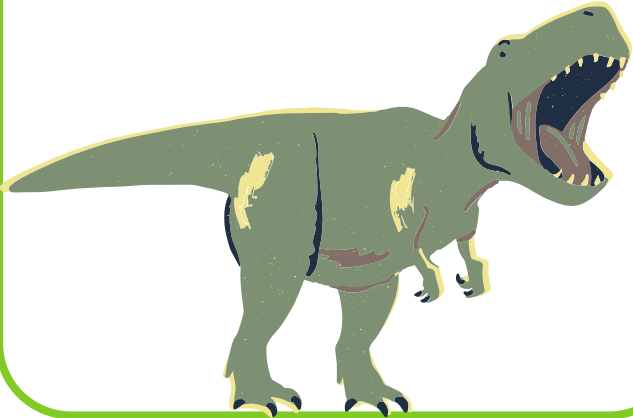
Exit Ticket



Ask each student the following questions as they walk out the door.

- Q: What is the difference between a herbivore and carnivore?
- A: A herbivore is a plant eating animal and a carnivore is a meat eating animal. An omnivore eats both!
- Q: How many dinosaur species can you name?
 - A: Tyrannosaurus Rex, Triceratops, Brachiosaurus, Stegosaurus, Velociraptor, and Ankylosaurus to name a few!

TYRANNOSAURUS REX (T. REX)



TRICERATOPS



BRACHIOSAURUS



STEGOSAURUS



VELOCIRAPTOR



ANKYLOSAURUS

