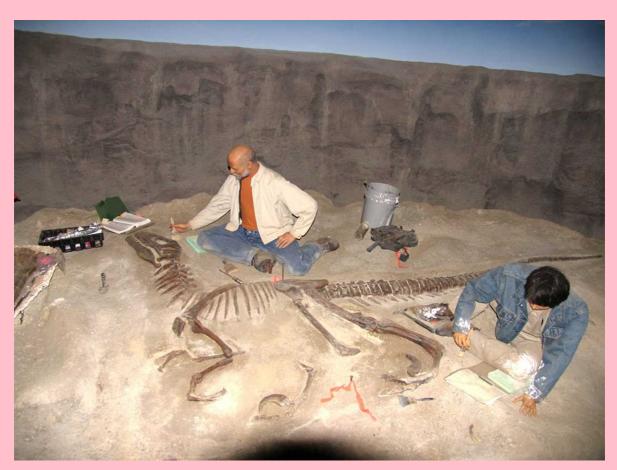
Fossils

Fossils are the remains or traces of plants and animals that lived long ago. Fossils give scientists clues about the past and are really important to help us learn about prehistoric things like dinosaurs!

Most fossils are found in earth that once lay underwater. They usually formed from the hard parts—such as shells or bones—of living things. After a living thing died, it sank to the bottom of the sea. Layers of earth and the remains of other living things built up on top of it. Over time, these layers turned into rock. Eventually, part or all of the living thing's hard parts also turned into rock. The fossil is the shape of these hard parts in the rock.

Other fossils are imprints on soft material that later hardened into rock. For example, scientists have found dinosaur footprints in rock that formed from mud.





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