



## FOSSIL FUN – Texture, Form, Contrast

Students use air-dry clay and Plaster of Paris to create fossils and paint them with watercolours.

Required Time

80 Minutes

Grade Level

Grade 3 to Grade 5

Subject

Language Arts  
Science  
Visual Arts

Vocabulary

cast  
contrast  
form  
fossil  
mold  
paleontologist

Materials

Crayola Air-Dry Clay - White  
Crayola Watercolour Paints - 8 Count  
Crayola Variety Brush Set - 5 Count  
Plaster of Paris  
Paper Towels  
Water Containers  
Plastic Containers/Bowls - 1 per student  
Small Plastic Animals and Shells  
Water

Shop Crayola  
Products

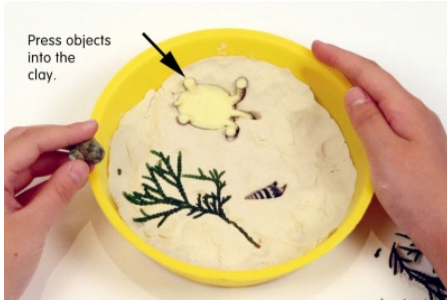
# Steps

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## Step One

1. Press some air dry clay into the bottom of the container.
2. It should be about 3 cm deep.



## Step Two

1. Press 3 or more objects into the clay.



## Step Three

1. Remove the objects.
2. You should see an imprint of the object in the clay.



## Step Four

1. Follow the package directions to mix about 3 cups of Plaster of Paris.
  - 2 parts Plaster of Paris powder to 1 part water
  - measure the water in a mixing container
  - measure the powder and place it in a separate container
  - slowly start to sprinkle the powder over the water
  - do **not** add the powder in one spot
  - tap the sides of the container to get rid of air bubbles
  - keep adding powder until it seems to sit on top of the water
  - slowly stir the mixture until it is smooth and creamy



## Step Five

1. Gently pour plaster of Paris over the air dry clay.
  2. It should be about 3.5 cm deep.
  3. Set the container aside and allow the plaster of Paris to dry for at least 2 days.
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## Step Six

1. Gently remove the plaster from the container.
2. Brush away any bits of clay.
3. Use watercolours or glitter watercolours to paint the fossil.
4. Choose contrasting colours so the objects stand out from the background.



# Learning Goals

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Students will be able to:

- create a fossil using shells, small toys and greenery;
- use colour to create contrast;
- explain how fossils are formed;
- demonstrate technical accomplishment and creativity;
- support their ideas with evidence found in the artworks.

## Extensions

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Have students:

- work in small groups to discover more about the study of fossils and what fossil scientists (paleontologists) do;
- find out why engineers might be interested in studying fossils;
- present their research to the class in a creative way.

## Prepare

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1. Gather and make available books about fossils and paleontology, for example, *Where Do Fossils Come from? How Do We Find Them? Archaeology for Kids - Children's Biological Science of Fossils Books*, by Bobo's Little Brainiac Books; *Rocks, Fossils & Arrowheads*, by Laura Evert; *Fossil*, by Bill Thomson; *Present to Past - Buried Treasure: Archaeology for Kids (Paleontology Edition) - Children's Archaeology Books*, by Pfiffikus; *Fossils Tell of Long Ago*, by Alike; *Fossils and Paleontology for kids: Facts, Photos and Fun - Children's Fossil*, by Baby Professor; *Curious About Fossils*, by Kate Waters; *A True Book: Paleontology: The Study of Prehistoric Life*, by Susan H Gray.
2. Download and display the *Colour, Form and Contrast posters* available on this website.
3. Review or introduce the elements colour and form, and the principle contrast.
4. If possible, make some fossils available for students to explore.
5. Download images of fossils from the Internet, for example,

**Pair of Fossils**

**Leaf**

**Imprint**

## Introduction

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1. View images of fossils and discuss what students already know about them, for example,
  - *What is a fossil?*
  - *How are they formed?*
  - *Who has found a fossil?*
  - *Where are they usually found?*
  - *Why are scientists interested in fossils?*
  - *What do we call a scientist who studies fossils?*
2. Develop a definition of fossil with the class.
  - *The preserved remains of prehistoric plants or animals.*
3. Introduce the challenge.

## Activities

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### The Challenge

1. Create a fossil using shells, small toys and greenery.
2. Use colour to create contrast.
3. Explain how fossils are formed.
4. Demonstrate technical accomplishment.
5. Support your ideas with evidence found in the works.

### The Process

1. Make sure everyone understands the challenge.
2. Establish success criteria with your students, for example,
  - *fossil includes at least 3 objects*
  - *contrasting colours make objects stand out against the background*
  - *accurate explanation of how fossils are formed*
  - *objects in fossil are easy to identify*
  - *effective painting technique*
  - *fossil is in good condition*
3. Guide students through the steps outlined in this lesson plan.
4. Observe students as they work.
5. Provide individual assistance and encouragement.

## Sharing

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1. Place students into small groups.
2. Ask them to:
  - *Share their work and discuss the things that are especially effective in the fossils and why.*
  - *Talk about what they found difficult and what they found easy to do.*
  - *Talk about what they learned about fossils by doing this project.*
3. Share ideas with the whole class.
4. Ask students to tell how they felt about doing this project.

## Assessment

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1. Observe students as they work - thoughtful focus, discriminating, seeking more information, elaborating, experimenting.
2. Observe students as they discuss their fossils - speaks with a clear voice, looks at audience while speaking, points to areas in the fossil, provides accurate information, answers questions from the audience effectively.
3. Observe students as they listen - looks at presenter, asks effective questions, supports ideas with evidence found in the artwork.
4. Use a checklist to track progress. (Downloads - Fossil\_tracking.pdf)
5. Have students use the self-assessment form to evaluate their work. (Downloads - Fossil\_self-assessment.pdf)