

## Fossil Park in your Classroom

### Overview:

Create fossils using Plaster of Paris

### Objectives:

Discuss what makes a fossil special. Describe how fossils can reveal information about the past.

### Links to Iowa Core:

Earth and Space (Grades 3-5): Students will understand and apply knowledge of fossils and the evidence they provide of past life on Earth.

Earth and Space (Grades 6-8): Students will understand and apply knowledge of earth history based on physical evidence. Fossils provide evidence of how life and environmental conditions have changed.

Time: 30 minutes for activity; 24 hours for dry-time

### Materials:

- Plaster of Paris
- Tinfoil
- Small objects, such as shells, leaves, small plastic animals, etc...
- Modeling clay

### Procedure:

1. Soften your modeling clay, form it into a mound, and place it inside some crumpled up foil.
2. Press fossil form into the clay. You'll need to wiggle it a bit and press firmly. Use a toothpick to remove the fossil form, if needed. You should have an impression in your clay in the shape of your object.
3. Mix up your Plaster of Paris. (Two parts plaster to one part water.)
4. Pour the plaster into your clay mold. Pour enough to cover the mold and then some. Gently shake to get out the bubbles and smooth the surface.
5. Wait several hours for the plaster to dry. Remove the tin foil. Remove the clay mold from the plaster. Wait an additional 24 hours to allow the fossil to dry completely.
6. Enjoy your fossil!

### Discussion:

Where do we find fossils? What is a fossil? What can fossils tell us about life on Earth?

