

Photo Description



These rocks have shapes of old sea animals inside them. The shapes look like shells that lived in the ocean long, long ago. These special rocks are called fossils.

Scientific Phenomena

The Anchoring Phenomenon is fossil formation through sedimentary processes. These fossils show ancient marine organisms (likely brachiopods and crinoids) that were buried in sediment millions of years ago. Over time, the soft parts decomposed while the hard shells and skeletal structures were preserved as the sediment turned to rock. This process demonstrates how Earth's materials change over very long periods of time and provides evidence of past life.

Core Science Concepts

1. Fossils as Evidence of Past Life - Fossils are remains or traces of plants and animals that lived long ago, preserved in rock
2. Rock Formation - Sedimentary rocks form when layers of sand, mud, and other materials pile up and harden over time
3. Deep Time - Earth is very old, and these changes happen over millions of years
4. Observation Skills - Scientists study fossils by looking carefully at their shapes, patterns, and features

Pedagogical Tip:

Use real fossils or high-quality replicas for hands-on exploration. First graders learn best through tactile experiences, and feeling the texture and weight of fossils makes the concept more concrete than pictures alone.

UDL Suggestions:

Provide multiple ways to explore fossils: visual (magnifying glasses), tactile (handling specimens), and kinesthetic (making clay impressions). Create fossil rubbings with paper and crayons to support students who learn better through art-based activities.

Zoom In / Zoom Out

1. Zoom In: At the microscopic level, mineral crystals slowly replace the original shell material molecule by molecule, preserving the detailed structure of the ancient organism while turning it to stone.
2. Zoom Out: These marine fossils are part of Earth's rock layers that tell the story of ancient oceans, climate changes, and the evolution of life across our entire planet over millions of years.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about the shapes in these rocks? (Bloom's: Remember | DOK: 1)
2. How do you think these shell shapes got inside the rocks? (Bloom's: Analyze | DOK: 2)
3. What can these fossils tell us about what Earth was like long ago? (Bloom's: Evaluate | DOK: 3)
4. If you found a fossil, what would you want to learn about it? (Bloom's: Create | DOK: 2)

Potential Student Misconceptions

1. Misconception: Fossils are just regular rocks that look like animals
Clarification: Fossils were once real living things that got preserved in rock over millions of years
2. Misconception: All fossils are dinosaur bones
Clarification: Fossils can be from many different plants and animals, including sea creatures, insects, and plants
3. Misconception: Fossils formed quickly, like in a few days
Clarification: Fossil formation takes millions of years through very slow processes

NGSS Connections

- Performance Expectation: 1-ESS1-1 - Use observations of the sun, moon, and stars to describe patterns that can be predicted
- Disciplinary Core Idea: K-ESS2.D - Things that people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them
- Crosscutting Concept: Patterns - Patterns in the natural world can be observed and used as evidence

Science Vocabulary

- * Fossil: The remains or shape of a plant or animal that lived long ago, saved in rock
- * Ancient: Something that is very, very old from long ago
- * Preserve: To keep something safe so it lasts a long time
- * Sediment: Tiny pieces of rock, sand, and mud that settle in layers
- * Shell: The hard outer covering that protects some sea animals

External Resources

Children's Books:

- Fossils Tell of Long Ago by Alike
- If You Find a Rock by Peggy Christian
- Digging Up Dinosaurs by Alike

YouTube Videos:

- "What is a Fossil? | Educational Video for Kids" - Simple explanation of fossil formation with colorful animations perfect for young learners - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7txiJp-Wfc>
- "Fossils for Kids | Learn about the different types of fossils" - Kid-friendly overview of different fossil types with real examples - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKu5RUhPZGc>