

WHAT DOES THE PALAEOLOGIST DO?

What do you need?

- This lesson can be carried out in the garden/park or set up indoors
- Hide a small item in soil, sand, shredded paper or something similar (not too deep)
- (optional) Tray/bucket
- Sand/soil or something similar
- Brushes (you can use brushes you usually paint with), spades, sticks
- Magnifying glass if available
- Toy dinosaurs if available
- Toys that represent bones/toy skeletons if available
- Pebbles, a picture of a bone, leaves
- Shells



What to do?



As a part of our learning about dinosaurs, we are going to pretend to hunt for fossils. Fossils are prints that are found in stones and rocks. The prints may be in the shape of bones, teeth, shells, leaves and other things that have been left in amongst the stones and rocks for a long time. A person that looks for fossils is called a palaeontologist. Fossils can they tell us

about what happened a long time ago on our planet Earth. Fossils are often found underground. Are you ready to look underground to see what you can find?

Ask a grown up to find a place where they can hide items underground for you to find. The grown up can hide lots of things to dig out from the ground such as, pebbles, toy dinosaurs or small bones, shells or whatever you have available. You could use a small patch under a tree, sand pit, etc. When you arrive at the buried fossil spot, have a go and dig! Now you are a fossil hunter and you can discover some amazing fossils hiding underground in your garden or in a tray indoors. Use some tools such as a plastic spade, rake, or a stick to help you start digging!



Ask your child:

- What can you see?
- What tools are you using?
- What do you think you can find underground?
- What have you found in the sand/soil?
- What does it look like? Can you describe it?



Explain to your child that if they have found a bone/pebble, they need to use a brush to carefully clear out all of the dirt. When a real palaeontologist finds an object, they make sure that nothing happens to it. It is very precious and fragile. Show your child how to gently handle the object and carefully clean it out and look at it carefully. If you have a magnifying glass, help your child use it to focus on the details of the found object.

Here are some questions you could ask your child:

- 'What can you see?'
- 'How many legs does this dinosaur have?'

- 'What colour is it?'
- 'How big do you think a dinosaur in real life might have been?'
- 'Do you think the dinosaur could fly, swim or walk?'
- 'Where do you think this shell came from?'

Maybe you have a dinosaur story you could read or an information book about dinosaurs at home that you can share with a grown up.

I hope you have enjoyed being a fossil hunter today.