

Fossils: Windows into Ancient Life

Grade 3

Science

Nonfiction

Art studio Theme

~137 words

NGSS.3-LS4-1

Name: _____ Date: _____

▢ READ — READ THIS PASSAGE CAREFULLY. YOU MAY READ IT TWICE.

Fossils are the preserved remains of plants and animals that lived long ago. Scientists study fossils like artists study their work in a studio. They carefully examine each fossil to learn about creatures from the past. Fossils form when dead organisms are buried in rocks and soil over millions of years. The bones, shells, and teeth harden into stone through a slow process. Some fossils show us what dinosaurs looked like and how they lived. Others tell us about ancient plants and small creatures. Paleontologists, or fossil scientists, use special tools to dig up and clean fossils, just like an artist uses brushes and chisels. By studying fossils, we can see how life on Earth has changed over time. Fossils help us understand which animals lived together and what the world was like millions of years ago.

▢ Tip: Read the passage twice before turning to the questions on the next page.

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Questions

⇒ **ANSWER** USE THE PASSAGE ON PAGE 1 TO HELP FIND YOUR ANSWERS.

MAIN IDEA

1. What is this passage mostly about?

TEXT EVIDENCE

2. According to the passage, what are two things that fossils can show us?

VOCABULARY

3. What does the word 'preserved' mean in this passage?

INFERENCE

4. Why might paleontologists need to be careful and patient when working with fossils?

CAUSE AND EFFECT

5. What causes fossils to form according to the passage?

TEXT EVIDENCE

6. How does the author compare what paleontologists do to what artists do?

✓ ANSWER KEY — Fossils: Windows into Ancient Life

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TEACHER / PARENT USE ONLY — Suggested answers shown below each question

Fossils are the preserved remains of plants and animals that lived long ago. Scientists study fossils like artists study their work in a studio. They carefully examine each fossil to learn about creatures from the past. Fossils form when dead organisms are buried in rocks and soil over millions of years. The bones, shells, and teeth harden into stone through a slow process. Some fossils show us what dinosaurs looked like and how they lived. Others tell us about ancient plants and small creatures. Paleontologists, or fossil scientists, use special tools to dig up and clean fossils, just like an artist uses brushes and chisels. By studying fossils, we can see how life on Earth has changed over time. Fossils help us understand which animals lived together and what the world was like millions of years ago.

MAIN IDEA

1. What is this passage mostly about?

The passage is mostly about what fossils are, how they form, and why scientists study them to learn about ancient life on Earth.

TEXT EVIDENCE

2. According to the passage, what are two things that fossils can show us?

The passage states that fossils can show us "what dinosaurs looked like and how they lived" and can tell us "about ancient plants and small creatures."

VOCABULARY

3. What does the word 'preserved' mean in this passage?

Preserved means kept safe and protected so that something does not break down or disappear over time.

INFERENCE

4. Why might paleontologists need to be careful and patient when working with fossils?

Fossils are very old and fragile, so paleontologists must work carefully so they do not damage them while studying them.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

5. What causes fossils to form according to the passage?

Fossils form when dead organisms are buried in rocks and soil, and over millions of years the bones, shells, and teeth harden into stone.

TEXT EVIDENCE

6. How does the author compare what paleontologists do to what artists do?

The author says paleontologists use special tools like "brushes and chisels" just as artists do, and they study fossils carefully like artists study their work in a studio.