

How Fossils are Formed

It takes fossils a very long time to form! Because of this, they are very valuable. Read through the steps of how fossils form.

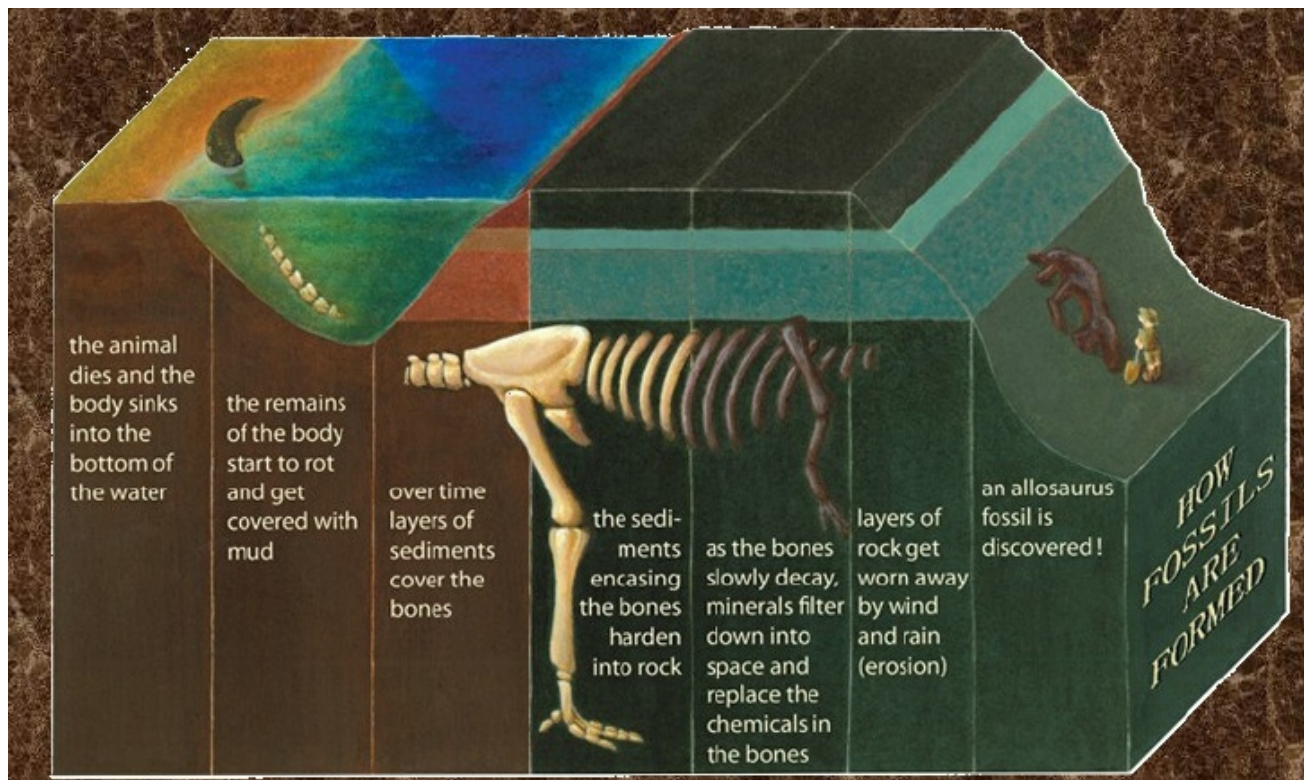


Image courtesy of: allinallnews.com

Reasons to Use Replica

Paleobiologists create fossil replicas for many reasons. Here are a few examples!

- Guests can touch and handle the replica without damaging the real fossil
- Can be displayed while the real fossil is being cleaned/studied
- Replicas can be displayed at more than one location at a time (like several different museums!)



Creating a Replica

Follow the steps below to create a replica of a fossil.

Step 1: Create Your Replica

- Get a fossil and modeling clay from your teacher.
- Split your modeling clay into two halves.



- Take your fossil and press it half way into one ball of clay.



- Carefully remove the fossil and compare the detail of your impression to the detail on the fossil.
- If you aren't happy with how your impression turned out, you can ball up your clay and try again.



- Use the second half of your clay to create an impression of the other half of your fossil.



- Once you are happy with both of your halves, ask your teacher for plaster.
- Fill both halves of your mold with plaster and let them sit until your plaster is completely dry.



Step 2: Get Your Replica Ready for the Museum!

- Collect both halves of your replica.
- Carefully pull the modeling clay off of your replica.



- Glue both halves of your replica together.
- Note: You may need to use sand paper to get rid of any bumpy or rough spots so that the pieces will fit together nicely.
- If extra plaster is available, use it to fill in any gaps or cracks.
- Use paints or markers to replicate the coloring of your fossil.

Step 3: Create a Museum Exhibit

Use art supplies and building materials to create a museum exhibit where your replica can be displayed. Use the pictures below to give you ideas of what to build.



Use the next page to create a museum sign that can hang near your new exhibit and teach visitors about what they are seeing.

Your sign must include the following:

- A name for your exhibit.
- The type of fossil on display.
- How the original fossil was formed (you can use the information from your "How fossils are formed" handout)

Museum Sign

