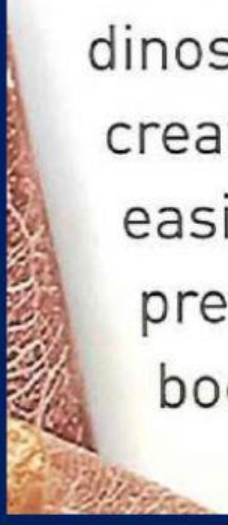
Geography

Read this page:

Fossil spotter

If you go hunting for fossils, it helps to know what to look out for. The most common fossils are not bones of land animals like dinosaurs, but the remains of small sea creatures. Sea animals fossilize more easily because the muddy sea floor can preserve them. Usually only the hardest body parts survive, such as shells, teeth, and bones.



The most common fossils are the remains of small _____.
They fossilize more easily because the _____ ___ _____ can preserve them. Usually only the _____ body parts survive, such as _____ , _____ and _____.

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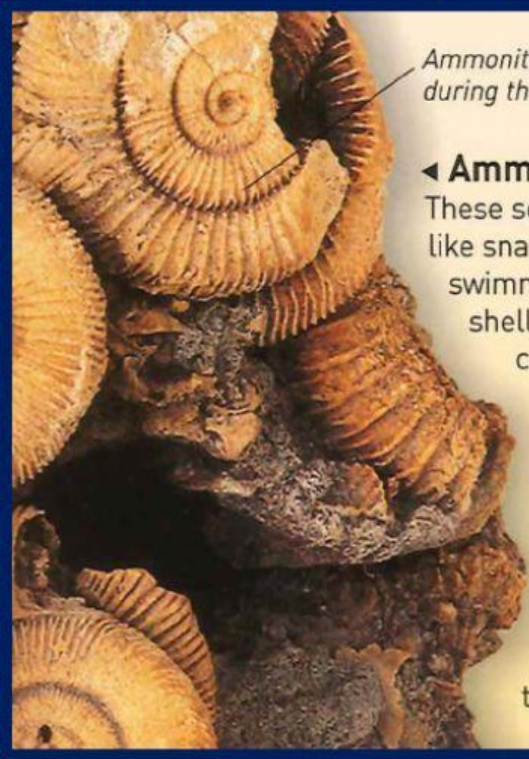
▲ **Brachiopod**
Most fossils with two hinged shells are bivalves or brachiopods. Both sides of a brachiopod's shell are symmetrical; bivalves have left and right shells that are mirror images.

◀ **Belemnite**
Bullet-shaped fossils are the internal shells of animals called belemnites, which were very much like modern squid. Like squid, they had long, torpedo-shaped bodies, ten arms, and an ink sac.

Draw and label each of these fossils

Please send me photos!!!!!



Ammonites were very common during the age of the dinosaurs

◀ **Ammonite**
These sea animals look a little like snails, but were in fact fast-swimming predators. Their shells were divided into compartments, with the animal in the largest, outer compartment. As the animal grew, it added new compartments, forming a spiral. The largest ammonites grew to 2 m (6½ ft) wide.

Crinoids used feathery arms to trap tiny sea creatures drifting through the water



▲ **Crinoid**
Crinoids, or sea lilies, look like flowers, but they are animals related to starfish. They still exist but were more common in the past. They anchor themselves to the sea floor by a long stalk.

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▲ Fish fossil
It's rare to find a whole fossil fish, but fossilized teeth – especially shark teeth – are very common. This fossil is of a bony fish that lived about 50 million years ago. Our backbones first evolved in a group of primitive fish over 500 million years ago.

Draw and label each of these fossils
Please send me photos!!!!!



◂ Trilobite
Trilobites scuttled around on the sea floor like lobsters 590–250 million years ago. Their fossils are common because they moulted as they grew. Many had large eyes made of transparent crystals of the mineral calcite.

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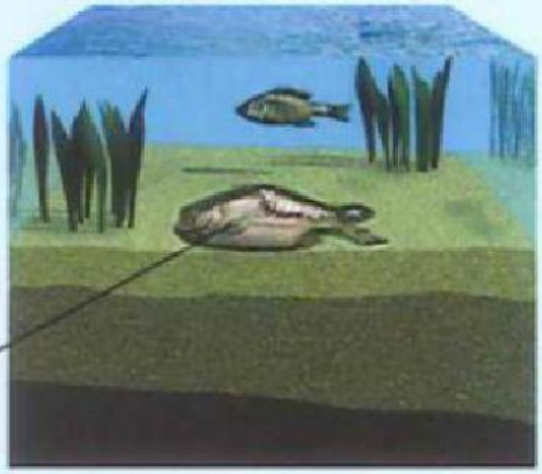
How fossils form

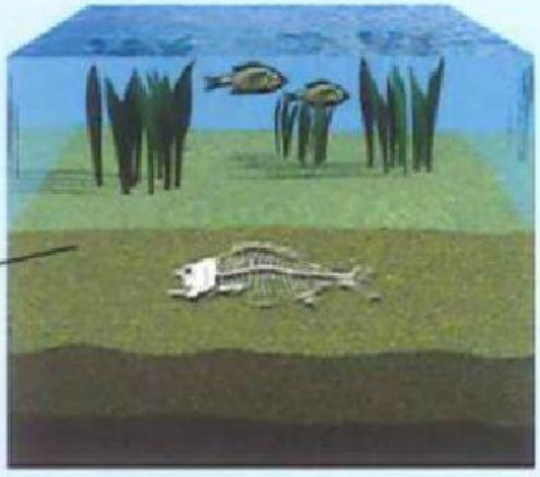
Special circumstances are needed for fossils to form. As a result, only a tiny fraction of the prehistoric animals that lived on Earth became fossilized (and only a tiny fraction of those have been found). The pictures below show how a fish might become fossilized on the sea floor.



The dead fish settles in mud on the sea floor

▲ Death

The fish dies and sinks to the sea floor. Worms and microbes eat the soft parts of its body as it sinks into the mud.



A layer of slimy mud buries the skeleton and helps preserve it

▲ Burial

Silt and sand build up over the skeleton, burying it. Deep in the mud there is less oxygen, so the decaying process slows down.

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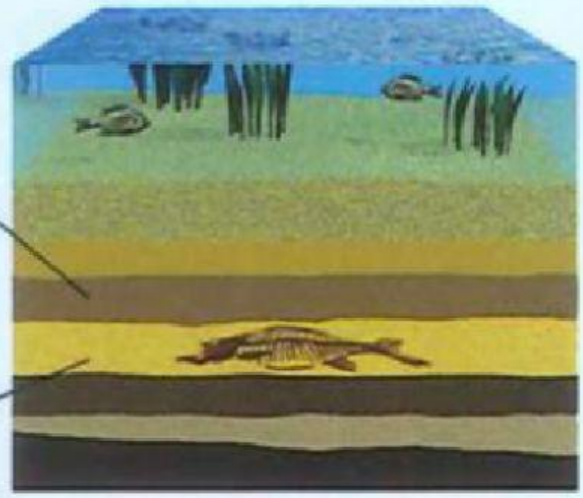

▲ Rock formation
Over thousands of years, the mud turns into rock, such as shale or limestone. The skeleton is slowly replaced by minerals and turns into rock.



▲ Discovery
Millions of years later, movements in Earth's crust have brought the rock to the surface of the land, where the fossil may be discovered.

In your own words - tell me what you remember about how fossils form:

Click here when you are done

