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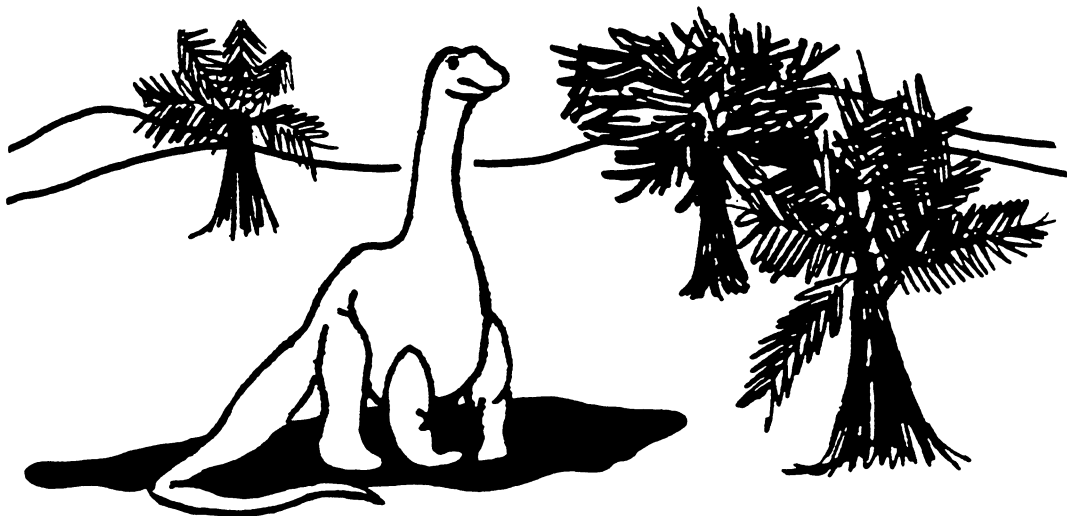
A Word to the Teacher

PALEONTOLOGY

PALEONTOLOGY (from the Greek word *palaios*, meaning ancient) is “a science dealing with the life of past geological periods as known from fossil remains” (*Webster’s Ninth*). The study of plants and animals whose remains have been preserved in rocks reveals much about our Earth’s past.

Paleontology is much more than learning about dinosaurs or discovering fossils; it is the story of the beginnings of natural history. From creatures too simple to be classified as plants to the warm-blooded mammals that outlived the dinosaur, the remains of the past tell the story of humanity and other animal life.

The paleontologist looks for missing pieces in the complex puzzle that describes our origins and enhances our understanding of life today. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the often-quoted paleontologist of the early twentieth century, speaks of the idea of “something greater and more indispensable than ourselves: something that existed before we did and could have continued to exist without us” in his book *Building the Earth*. The study of paleontology, then, may provide more than an “interesting” prehistoric view of the process of life on this planet. Within the ancient digs of our Earth may remain a hint of the meaning of the universe.



Interest Development Centre

PALEONTOLOGY

The purpose of this interest centre is to stimulate interest in the topic area. Students need time for browsing and investigating for maximum benefit. To expedite the exploration process, you might make the following materials available. These are beginning ideas; you and your students will think of more. Let parents and other teachers know about the centre, and it will grow without effort.

BOOKS, POSTERS, VIDEOS AND SLIDES

Fossils
Geology and geologic eras
Dinosaurs
Glaciers
Volcanoes
Paleontologists
Early fish, reptiles and plants
Archaeologists
Prehistory
Creation myths and legends
Rock strata
Early tools
Early humans
Extinction
Current endangered species

OBJECTS AND ARTEFACTS

Pamphlets from natural history museums
Models, stuffed animals or toy dinosaurs
Real fossils or replicas of fossils
A time line of the history of the world
Songs and recordings about dinosaurs
National Geographic magazines and related journals

ART SUPPLIES

Watercolours, chalk, oil pastels, plasticine, markers
and various weights and textures of paper



1. Setting the Stage

Millions of years ago the plants and animals that lived on Earth were different from the ones we see now. We can learn about these ancient forms of life by studying fossils. The study of fossils is called *paleontology*.

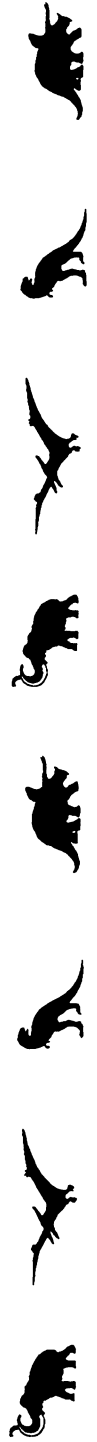
Have you ever seen a fossil?

- Draw a picture of a fossil you have seen.

OR

- Draw a picture showing what you think an ancient plant or animal might have looked like.





2. Research

For the record:

Largest dinosaur

Smallest dinosaur

Most unusual dinosaur

Add some other facts

