

**Project FOCUS
Best Lessons
THIRD GRADE**

Title of Lesson: Making Fossils

Theme: Earth/Space Science

Unit Number: **Unit Title:** Rocks, Minerals, Soil and Fossils

Performance Standard(s) Covered (enter code):

S3E2. Students will investigate fossils as evidence of organisms that lived long ago.

a. Investigate fossils by observing authentic fossils or models of fossils or view information resources about fossils as evidence of organisms that lived long ago.

b. Describe how a fossil is formed.

Enduring Standards (objectives of activity):

Habits of Mind

- Asks questions
- Uses numbers to quantify
- Works in a group
- Uses tools to measure and view
- Looks at how parts of things are needed
- Describes and compares using physical attributes
- Observes using senses
- Draws and describes observations

Content (key terms and topics covered):

Fossil
Mold fossil
Model

Learning Activity (Description in Steps)

Abstract (limit 100 characters):

Students will make their own fossils.

Details:

Discuss with the students what a fossil is, where it comes from, how it is made, and what the different types are called. Tell the students that the type of fossil they are going to be modeling today is called a mold fossil.

Give each student a plastic bag filled with clay. Tell them that they cannot remove the clay from the bag. Have the students flatten the clay with their hands (while it is in the bag). One at a time, allow each student to come up to the back of the classroom and select an object to "fossilize" by pressing it into the clay.

After every student has created their own fossil, as long as time allows, randomly pick from the class a few fossils for the students to observe. Ask the students to guess what was fossilized. How do they know? What do they see? What kind of fossils are these? Have the students record their observations.

Materials Needed (Type and Quantity):

- Modeling clay - approximately 1/2 a block per student
- Ziplock baggies - 1 per student
- Small objects to "fossilize" - Shells, feathers, pine cones, twigs, small toys, etc.

Notes and Tips (suggested changes, alternative methods, cautions):

- **Tip:** This activity was originally performed after watching "The Magic School Bus: Bussasaurus."
- **Caution:** Be sure none of the students put the clay or small objects in their mouths.

Sources/References:

- 1) Originally submitted by Emily Leonard, edited by Jessica Valle (2010)
- 2)
- 3)