

Fossil Detectives



Ages	Subject	Topics	Resources
7-11 years	Science Maths	Dinosaurs Fossils	Fossils (if possible), images of fossils, worksheets & cardboard footprints (scaled from templates) from activity pack, tape measures, paper, pencils, clipboards

Have you ever wondered why certain animals get fossilised and others do not? In this Science and Mathematics based activity, children will explore how to recognise and categorise fossils. This activity also explores trace fossils which can provide clues as to what the ancient environment was like and how animals such as dinosaurs used to move around. By creating your own dinosaur footprint trackways, children can calculate walking speeds of an Iguanodon and compare it to how they walk.



Teachers' Materials

To aid this investigation, try and get hold of some real fossil specimens for the children to handle and examine. You can also use the Jurassic Coast Fossil Finder database (URL below) to explore some high quality fossil images. To make your large dinosaur footprints for the footprint trackway investigation, you'll need some large pieces of stiff cardboard. You also need a 30m tape measure for both dinosaur and pupil trackways.

<https://jurassiccoast.org/what-is-the-jurassic-coast/all-about-fossils/fossils-of-the-jurassic-coast/> Last accessed August 2019

Practicalities

The dinosaur trackway activity is best delivered in a large space such as the school hall or even on the school playing field as part of a PE lesson.

Discussions

Geology is based on the principle that the present is the key to the past. What kinds of changes (e.g. deforestation, pollution, climate change) are we making to our current world that influence what geologists find in the future? What kinds of fossils might a future geologist find in rock layers a thousand years from now that will tell them how we lived (e.g. a layer of fossilised litter or mobile phones)?

Extensions and Adaptations

As a further Art and Design extension to this activity, you could stick dinosaur shaped footprints (cut out of sponge) to the bottom of wellington boots and get children to make their own dinosaur trackways along rolls of lining paper.

Links to Other Resources

Fossil Detectives links well to the following resources:

- How do Fossils Form?
- Dinosaur Top Trumps
- How did Ammonites Move?
- Mary Anning