

Praxis "Making Science Fun"

Make a Fossil?

Fossils can take many forms. In this activity we'll make our own fossils.

Materials:

- 1 cup of coffee grounds
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup salt
- ½ cup cold coffee
- Mixing spoon
- Wax paper
- Glass or jar
- Mixing bowl
- Shells, beads, small toy animals or insects



Procedure: (Remember to be sure to have your parent's permission and they have the time to watch and help you.)

- Mix the dry ingredients together then stir in the coffee.
- Pour the mixture onto the wax paper and flatten it out.
- Cut circles out the flatten mixture using the upside-down glass or jar.
- Press the objects into the mixture then carefully lift them out.
- Let the mixture harden overnight.
- If they are not completely dry, turn them over and let them dry another day.

What's happening?

When you pressed objects into the mixture it left a shape called a fossil mould. Some fossils, like the footprints left by animals, are like this. Some are the imprints left behind when organic matter decays after being covered by mud. Fossils can also be formed when minerals replace the organic matter. This activity may be found at: <http://www.hometrainingtools.com/fossil-science-projects/a/1653/>

Extension:

We are lucky that our city is located in prime territory for fossils from the late Cretaceous period, roughly 70-80 million years ago. As a child in Medicine Hat I found many fossils in back alleys, along the riverbank or in the coulees. I even found some in the River Heights school yard when it was being dug up for water line maintenance. My son once found a piece of hadrosaur bone in our back yard when he was ten years old. Keep your eyes to the ground, you'll never know what you might find but please note that Alberta has strict rules about collecting fossils. See the Peterson Family Website http://aledeon.net/Home/Palaeo_Fossils.asp for an impressive web log about fossils from our area.

This activity is based on our "Digging Dinosaurs" Learning Kit. Our teaching kits (described on our website) are loaned out FREE to provide classroom teachers and parents of home schooled children as an opportunity to explore Science in interesting ways. Please consider volunteering as one of our classroom speakers or allow your business as a field trip location.

Our next major event that Praxis is involved with is the Kiwanis Regional South East Alberta Science Fair on March 24th. For more information check out our Praxis website and their website at: <http://www.seab-sciencefair.com/>

Lorne Cooper, Regional Executive Director

PRAXIS, "Making Science Fun". Contact Praxis at praxis@praxismh.ca, www.praxismh.ca, Tweet or follow us @PraxisMedHat, or friend us on Facebook. Address: c/o 200 7th Street S.W., Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 4K1 Phone: 403-527-5365, Fax: 403-527-6570.