

Paleontology

Words & signs



Paleontology is a kind of science that means learning about plants, animals, and other things (but not people) that lived a long, long time ago. Paleontologists find fossils and study them to find out what kinds of things used to live in the area.

A **fossil** is a special kind of rock that shows what used to be alive in the place around it. Some fossils are bones or shells that have turned into stone. Some fossils are rocks that used to be mud, and still show a space where a footprint or leaf used to be. Fossils can be huge, like a dinosaur bone. Fossils can be tiny, like a sea shell.



Paleontologists use **tool belts** to carry our tools. A tool belt has a loop or a pocket for each tool.



We also use **backpacks** to carry bigger things. When we find a fossil, we can put it in the backpack. We will bring it home to study more later.

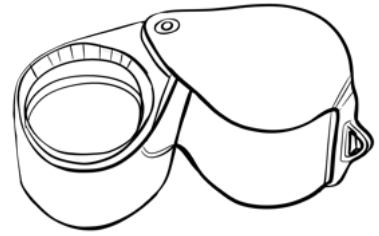


Paleontologists use **maps** to tell us where to go. A map is a special picture that shows where things are and how to get from one place to another.

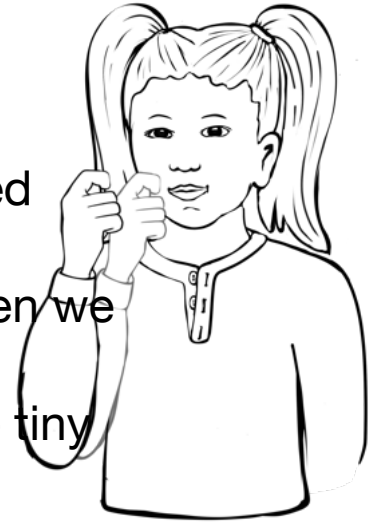




A **hand lens** is a tool for looking at small details. A hand lens is a strong magnifying glass in a special case. The case protects the glass lens from dirt and rocks so it doesn't get scratched or broken.



A **magnifying glass** is a curved piece of glass (or plastic) that makes things look bigger. When we look at something through a magnifying glass, we can see tiny details much more clearly!



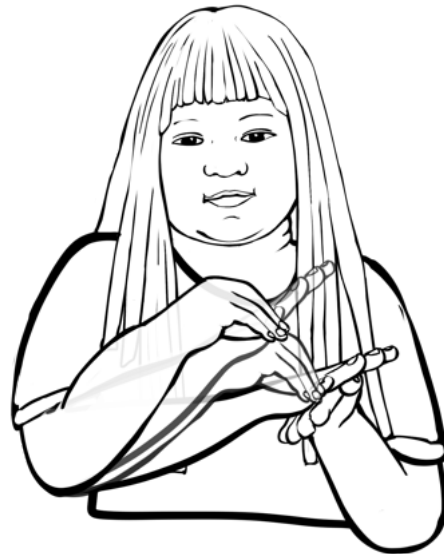
Paleontologists need to know how big or how small each fossil is.

We use a **ruler** to **measure** the fossil, and then we write down the numbers in a notebook.



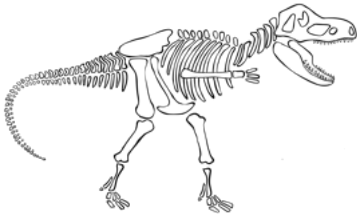


Paleontologists need to remember what fossils look like, how big they are, and where they were found. We bring a **notebook** and **pencil** in our tool belt so we are ready to **record** all the information! We will use the pencil to write our measurements and draw pictures in the notebook.

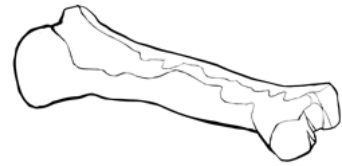


WHAT WAS IT?

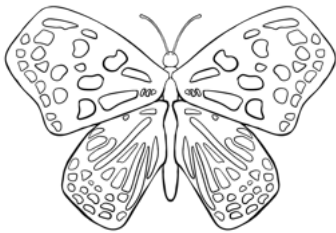
Sometimes when things are left alone for a long time, they break or fall apart. When paleontologists find a fossil, we try to figure out what it was when it was alive.



One leg bone is left from the dinosaur's skeleton.



A dinosaur made footprints in the mud, and the mud turned to stone.



The butterfly got stuck in tree sap, which turned into amber.



Animals with shells lived in the area a long time ago, when it was under water.



You can be a paleontologist! Look at the fossils in the first row. What do you think they used to be? Draw lines to match each fossil to the creature it came from.

