

Student Fossil-Dig Instructions

Paleobotanists have to work carefully so that they don't destroy the fragile fossils they are trying to recover. As you conduct your dig, follow these instructions for a successful excavation! Each team member should record their findings in their science notebooks. Include today's date, drawings, and any important notes or questions you may have about the fossil.

Materials needed:

- 1 fossil "dig"
- 1 craft stick or plastic spoon
- 1 flat paint brush
- 1 large paper plate
- science notebook
- goggles

Directions:

- The fossil you are searching for may be in pieces. The pieces may break if you are not careful!
- Each member of your team will have a chance to dig within their designated grid area.
- Only one team member should have their hands in the pan at a time! You can decide as a team who goes first, second, etc.
- Within your designated grid area, gently move the soil around with the spoon or craft stick until you expose a piece of the fossil.
- When you locate a piece, lift it out carefully and place it gently on the paper plate. Continue until you have found all the pieces in your grid area.
- After you have all your excavated pieces on the paper plate, use the flat paint brush to clear off the soil carefully, then record your findings in your science notebook.
- When all the pieces of the fossil have been excavated from the designated areas, place them all carefully together to see what the fossil looks like. Write your observations in your science notebooks.
- Remember that you may be missing pieces of your fossil; reconstruct it as best as you can.
- Team fossils will be saved for discussion in the class period. Be sure to write your team number, name, or other identifier on the edge of the paper plate.