

What are fossils?

Structure

Question in the heading
Introduction tells about topic

Explanation sequence
Facts in order - tell how and why

Conclusion
To sum up

Diagram
Labelled diagrams or pictures to explain topic

Language features

Use of timeless present tense
e.g. 'rots', 'becomes', 'turns'

Words showing how and why
e.g. 'but', 'when'

Use of technical terms
e.g. 'palaeontologists'

What are fossils?

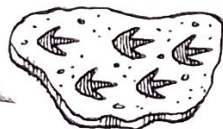
Fossils are the prints or parts of animals and plants that lived on Earth long ago.

Fossils help us to know what the plants and animals were like thousands of years ago. A fossil can be an animal that died and became trapped in sand, mud or rock. The soft part of the body rots, but the bones or skeleton becomes harder and turns to stone.

Some fossils are prints of a plant, or an animal or a shell. Sometimes living things fell into mud or tar and became buried. When the body rotted away a mould was left.

Scientists can fill the mould with plaster or plastic and make a cast of the animal.

Scientists who look for and study fossils are called palaeontologists.



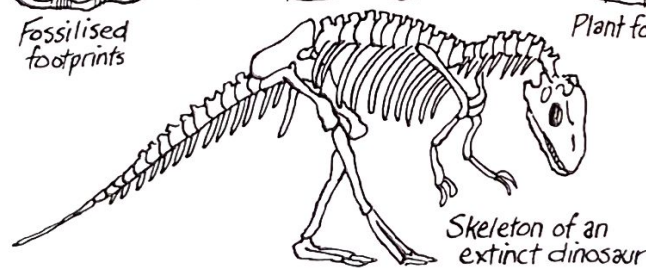
Fossilised footprints



Snail fossil



Plant fossil



Skeleton of an extinct dinosaur

Writer's Challenge

Technical terms

Explanations often use technical terms. Circle these technical terms in the explanation and find and write their meanings.

1 mould _____

2 skeleton _____
