

Getting Into the Fossil Record

Go to the website <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/education/explorations/tours/fossil/>

You will start with level 1, which is very simplistic. Then, advance to level 2. Answer all of the questions below, which are from this computer activity and are in order as they appear on the tutorial.

1. Define *fossil record*.

2. What is a paleontologist?

On the page titled, "There are many different types of fossils," click on the fossil picture and see pictures of more examples.

3. What is a trace fossil? On this page, look at slide show of examples of trace fossils.

4. Name five kinds of trace fossils.

5. In your own words describe how a fossil can form?

6. Find the walnut. How did it become a fossil?

7. Do you think an organism that gets buried quickly or slow will be more likely to form a fossil? Explain.

8. How does a decomposer prevent fossils from being formed?

9. What are some ways an organism becomes a fossil?

10. In each of these examples the organism was buried in sediment. But does an organism always have to be buried in sediment to become a fossil?
11. What are three ways that an organism can be preserved without being buried by sediment? Most of the time the entire organism is found when preserved in this manner.
12. Where an organism dies is important in whether a fossil is formed. What are the four areas listed and which ones are the best for forming fossils?
13. Why is it difficult for an organism living in the rainforest to become a fossil?
14. What are three reasons that the fossil record is incomplete?
15. Of all the organisms alive today, what percent do you think will eventually become fossils?
16. Even after a fossil is formed it can be destroyed. What are four ways that are described on the web page for fossil destruction? Make sure you read about each.
17. What are the three types of rock and how are each formed? Which is most likely to contain fossils?
18. Find the map of Montana. What are two things to keep in mind when you are looking for a fossil like *T. rex*? What do the colors and letters represent?

19. Why do paleontologists sometimes look on the sides of hills and other areas where uplift and erosion have occurred?

20. Draw the chart that shows how an organism gets into the fossil record. After you are done with this please go to the review page and take quiz. You must show me the results of the quiz

21. You are a paleontologist at a fossil dig site in the Gobi Desert. You find a site filled with many fossilized leaves, teeth, bones, eggs and even footprints from a variety of creatures. BUT you find no trace of insects. One possible explanation is that no insects lived in the Gobi at that time. What is another possible explanation for the lack of insects?