Essential Question: How do fossils provide evidence about plants and animals that lived long ago?

Fossils: The preserved remains or traces of a once-living organism, usually found in stone. Fossil remains include bones, shells, eggs, seeds, footmarks and scratch marks. During fossil formation the soft part of an animal rots away and bones or shells are buried in mud and stone.

Mold Fossil: An imprint of a once-living organism.

Cast Fossil: Forms when sediments fill in a mold or an imprint and hardens.

Inferences: Scientists will determine the age of a rock or a fossil in an attempt to guess the age of the once-living organism that created the fossil. Fossils also give clues as to where rocks originally formed. For example, a rock containing a fossil of a fish, probably formed underwater.

Past Climates: Fossils can provide clues about past climates. For example, a fossil of a tropical plant may mean that a tropical environment once existed in a particular area.

Index Fossil: A fossil of an organism that existed for a short period of time in many places. Index fossils can be used to determine rock ages and to match rocks that were moved to different locations.

Materials: Water, paper plate, coin, various types of soil, stones, etc.

Experiment: Choose two different materials from outside (such as different types of soil, sand and or stones) to mix with water on a paper plate. Use a coin and attempt to make a fossil using each material you chose.

Lab Report/Data Chart: Compare and contrast your two fossils by answering the following questions:

1) Which substance created a better looking fossil?

2) What are some substances you think form fossils easily in nature? Why?

Home Connection:
Dear Parent/Family Member:
Please share your reactions to your child’s work on this activity.

Write YES or NO for each statement.
1. My child understood the homework and was able to discuss it. _________
2. My child and I enjoyed the activity. _________
3. This assignment helped me know what my child is learning in science. _________

Other comments:

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PARENT SIGNATURE