

Fossils

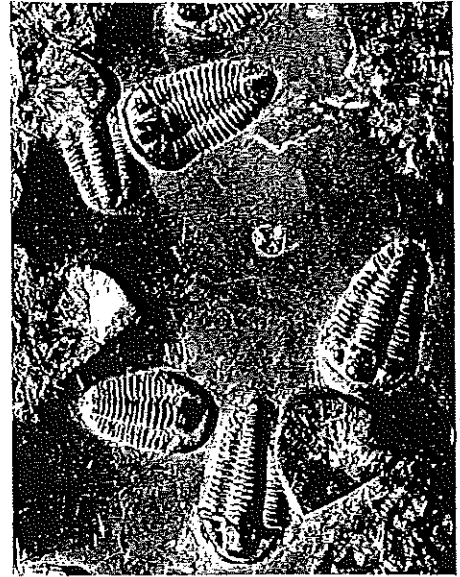
Fossils are the remains or imprints of plants and animals that died long ago. Fossils are usually found in sedimentary rock.

When a dead animal or plant gets covered by sediment, a **mold** or **cast** of the fossil may form. As the sediments harden into rock, the soft parts of the dead matter will decay. The empty space left in the rock is called a mold. It has the same shape as the plant or animal. If the mold fills with minerals from water, the minerals may harden to form a cast. The cast also has the same shape as the living thing that died.

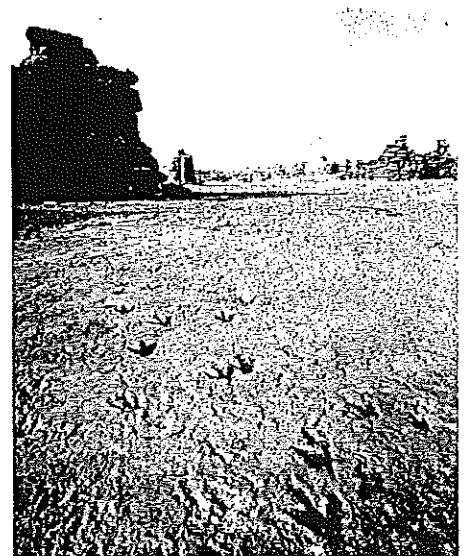
Traces of animals, such as footprints, may also become fossils. Footprints are often found in mud that later hardened into rock.

Whole plants or animals are the rarest kind of fossil. But entire giant woolly mammoths have been found frozen in ice.

Fossils are an important source of information about the past. For example, if scientists find fossils of shells on dry land, they know that that part of Earth was once covered with water.



Cast and Mold Fossils



Dinosaur Footprints

Underline the correct words.

1. (Fossils, Rocks) are the remains or imprints of plants and animals that died long ago.
2. Fossils are usually found in (sedimentary, igneous) rock.
3. Footprints of animals (may, may not) become fossils.
4. Giant woolly mammoths have been found frozen in (mud, ice).