



# INVESTIGATION PALEONTOLOGY

Level: **Grades 3-5**

Length: **45 minutes**

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Get an interactive crash course in paleontology! Excavate fossils at a miniature dig site, connect the traits of bones and teeth to the ecology of ancient organisms, and use clues to identify where, when, and how your discovered animal may have lived. Hands-on activities and instructor-led discussions help frame fossils in their important role in understanding Earth's biological past.

## CURRICULUM CORRELATIONS

Students will:

- Identify the steps of the fossilization process and the two categories of fossils: body and trace. **S3E2b**
- Practice measuring, writing descriptions, and making predictions based on scientific observations.
- Draw connections between the physical traits of fossils and the appearance and ecological role (i.e. predator vs. prey) of ancient organisms. **S3E2a; S4L1a**

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How are *structure* and *function* related in organisms?  
*How* and *why* do scientific theories change over time?

## PROGRAM VOCABULARY

Body Fossil

Geologic Time  
Mineralization

Paleoecology  
Trace Fossil

## ASSOCIATED VOCABULARY

Carnivore  
Extinct

Herbivore  
Omnivore

Paleontology

## PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

As a class, review vocabulary. Define paleontology and discuss a few examples of ancient life, from early invertebrates to more recent mammals.

## AT THE MUSEUM

Take a trip through evolutionary time in **A Walk Through Time in Georgia** to discover the ancient organisms which filled Earth's seas, lands, and skies. Also, view the **Giants of the Mesozoic** to experience dinosaurs and pterosaurs which once roamed the subtropical forests of what is now Argentina.

## POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Have students research and write a report about an extinct creature, describing when paleontologists discovered it and any important traits they uncovered (e.g. its size, feeding habits, habitat, any other notable adaptations).