

Name: _____

Date: _____

Finding a fossil is fun, and so is making one. Read the directions on how to do it and then answer the questions that follow.

Activity: Make Your Own Fossil

Finding a real fossil is terrific! Fossils are rocks that contain the imprint of bones, shells, or leaves that existed thousands—maybe even millions—of years ago. You may not find a real fossil very often—or ever. But you can make your own fossil. Here are directions for making your own fossil.

You will need:

- 1 small bag of plaster of Paris (ask at a hardware store)
- Water
- 1 empty coffee can
- 1 old aluminum pie or cake pan
- Something to stir with (like a paint-stirring stick)
- Some small objects to press into your fossil (shells, leaves, stones, buttons, bottle caps, even your hand will do)
- A piece of picture-hanging wire (if you want to hang your fossil on the wall)
- A cup

How to do it:

1. Spread newspapers on the floor or table where you are going to work. (This can get messy!)
2. Collect your "fossil objects."
3. Pour a cup of plaster of Paris into the coffee can.
4. Stir in enough water until it looks like thick pancake batter, following the directions on the box.
5. Pour the plaster of Paris mixture into the aluminum pan.
6. Place your fossil objects on the plaster and press down firmly.
7. If you want to hang your fossil on the wall when it's dry, twist a piece of wire into a loop and stick it into the top of the mold.
8. Wait 5 minutes, then carefully remove the objects.
9. Let the plaster dry, remove it from the pan, and **YOU HAVE MADE A FOSSIL!!**

If you can't get plaster of Paris, you can also make a fossil with clay.

1. What can you use in place of plaster of Paris to make a fossil?

- A. flour
- B. glue
- C. clay
- D. sugar

2. Which would NOT be good to use to make a fossil?

- A. a chicken feather
 - B. dead leaf
 - C. a piece of paper
 - D. fish bones
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3. Someone might read this story to

- A. find a project for science class.
 - B. learn how to make plaster of Paris.
 - C. discover where to look for fossils.
 - D. find out how fossils form in nature.
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4. When making a fossil, the coffee can is used to

- A. wash the pie pan.
 - B. pour the water.
 - C. hold the fossil objects you collect.
 - D. mix the plaster of Paris.
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5. What should you do FIRST when you make your own fossil?

- A. pour the plaster of Paris mixture into the pan
 - B. put a loop of wire into the plaster of Paris
 - C. press objects into the plaster of Paris
 - D. spread newspapers on the floor
-

6. You must remove the "fossil objects" 5 minutes after you put them in place. If you do not do so, what will happen?

- A. They will not leave an imprint.
 - B. The plaster of Paris will not get hard.
 - C. They will get stuck in the hard plaster.
 - D. They will sink into the plaster.
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7. The writer gives step 4 to tell how

- A. thick the plaster of Paris must be.
 - B. long to stir the mixture.
 - C. much plaster of Paris to use.
 - D. to make pancake batter.
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The Story of Andre is a book about a seal who really lived in Maine with a family. Read the passage from The Story of Andre and then answer the questions that follow.

Andre Becomes a Celebrity

by Lew Dietz

As Daddy continued his training of the seal, more and more people began gathering at the seawall to watch. When they clapped, it was easy to see that Andre enjoyed the attention.

My father put a beach ball into the pen and taught the seal to swim about with the beach ball balanced on his nose. Then Andre would toss it into the air for Daddy to catch. One day we heard a lady say, "Why that seal is almost human!"

Daddy said to Andre, "Perhaps we ought to tell the nice lady that you're only acting like a seal. Doesn't she know that seals were pushing things around with their noses a million years before humans learned to throw a rock?"

So it wasn't at all hard to have Andre do things seals had been doing for a million years. Since seals leap into the air when they are feeling playful, Andre leaped through a motorcycle tire hung up in his pen. Seals are curious, too, so when objects were thrown into the water, Andre would chase after them and bring them back.

When a little boy in the audience yelled, "Hey, how do you catch a seal?" my father tied a knot on the end of a rope and tossed it into the water. Andre grabbed the knot and began tugging. Daddy hauled Andre onto the dock. "That's one way to catch a seal, son," he said. "But first you should get to know the seal."

I suppose a bear has to be taught to ride a bicycle, and a poodle has to be taught to stand on its hind legs and drink tea. Daddy didn't bother with that sort of nonsense. He asked Andre only to do things that seals have always done, except, of course, for a few silly things.

For instance, this is how he taught Andre to pretend to be ashamed of himself. One day, seeing Andre stretched out with one flipper over his eyes, he said, "Andre, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"—and right away gave him a fish. The very next time he asked Andre, "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" the seal stretched out and hid its eyes with its flipper.

It was just a wonderful game to Andre.

8. When people clapped, Andre felt

- A. frightened.
- B. happy.
- C. angry.
- D. sad.

9. What did Andre balance on the end of his nose?

- A. a fish
 - B. a knot
 - C. a ball
 - D. a tire
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10.

Daddy hailed Andre onto the dock.

The word *hailed* has the same meaning as

- A. called.
- B. pulled.
- C. pushed.
- D. chased.

Answer Key

1. C) clay
2. C) a piece of paper
3. A) find a project for science class.
4. D) mix the plaster of Paris.
5. D) spread newspapers on the floor
6. C) They will get stuck in the hard plaster.
7. A) thick the plaster of Paris must be.
8. B) happy.
9. C) a ball
10. B) pulled.