



Fossils

1 Do you know what a “paleontologist” is? If not, turn to page 11 and the glossary to find out. What do you think it would be like to be a paleontologist? Would you like to be one?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.4, RI.4.4

2 Turn to pages 12–13 about types of fossils. What extra information does the text in the green box give? Do you think this box is a helpful addition to the main text?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.5

3 Look at pages 14–15 about mold fossils and cast fossils. What is the purpose of the photos? How do they help you understand the text?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.7, RI.4.7

4 Read pages 16–17 about preserving organisms. Describe how an entire organism can be preserved as a fossil.

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.1, RI.4.1

5 Turn to pages 18–19 about trace fossils. What can tracks tell us about animals in the past?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.1, RI.4.1

6 Read about coprolites on pages 20–21. Why does the author say that poop sometimes “has hidden treasures”?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.1, RI.4.1

7 Turn to pages 28–29. Why does the author think that fossils are an important tool? Do you agree?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.6, RI.4.8

8 Do you know what “arid” means? If not, turn to the glossary to find out. Can you think of some places in the world that are arid?

Common Core State Standards (Reading: Informational text): RI.3.4, RI.4.4

Answers

- 1** A scientist who studies plant and animal fossils to learn about the past; Answers will vary.
- 2** Extra information about body fossils; Answers will vary.
- 3** To show what the different types of fossil look like; Answers will vary.
- 4** The organisms can get stuck in sticky tree resin, which hardens and turns to amber, trapping them inside; they can also be preserved in tar and ice.
- 5** whether an animal walked on two feet or four, the animal's size and speed, whether an animal was injured, which animals traveled in herds
- 6** Scientists recently found an undiscovered species of beetle inside some poop.
- 7** They help us understand the world today; they reveal how ancient animals and plants evolved over time; they show how the Earth's environment has changed over time; Answers will vary.
- 8** Extremely dry; Answers will vary.