



Kids STEAM-to-go

# DIG INTO PREHISTORY

March 2021

**This kit contains small pieces and plaster dust; adult supervision is recommended.**



## Materials List

- Excavation "Site"  
(tray with approx. 5 artifacts)
  - Excavation tools:
    - Large bristle brush
    - Small bristle brush
    - Old metal spoon, hammer or other similar tools\*
- (Optional...adult supervision recommended)

### \*\*\*Please Note\*\*\*

The "earth" in the dig tray is a mix of screened topsoil, playground sand and Plaster of Paris. While the plaster is non toxic, the manufacturers recommend not breathing in the dust.

Paleontologists use special tools and methods when they excavate a site for fossils. Explore your own "dig site" to see what bits of history you unearth!

## Directions:

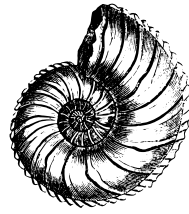
1. Set up a work space that you don't mind getting dirty (outside is ideal if possible).
2. Use a metal spoon or other similar tool that you don't mind getting dirty to gently scratch the surface of your "dig site" tray, slowly scraping away layers as you search for signs of prehistoric life. Not able to make it through the top layer with a spoon? Try to gently tap with a hammer or other tool.
3. When you come to something interesting, use the brushes to uncover them as carefully as you can. What did you find?

## Extend It!

Speculate what the story might be of the items you find in your "site." What might it mean, for example, if a fossil is found under a layer of rocks, or what could have happened to make different parts of the same fossil end up in separate locations?



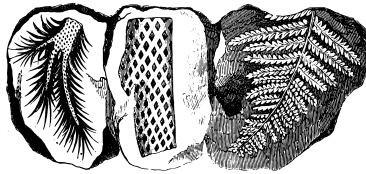
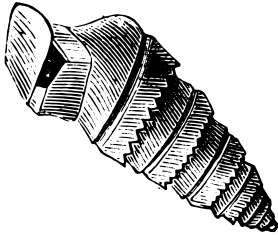
## Modifications & Extensions



### For a younger crowd...

Make your own dig site in a sandbox or sensory tub, either reusing the items from your dig site or discovering new things.

Encourage your child to dig through the sand/dirt/etc... to find what is hidden. Help them speculate or imagine how and why that item might have gotten there.



### For more advanced learners...

Paleontologists work methodically through their dig sites to be sure to find what is there and how items relate to other items in the same area. Many times, a grid is laid out over a location to allow them to precisely show where things are found.

As a challenge, try making grid marks over your excavation "site" and draw the items you find on graph paper to show their locations.

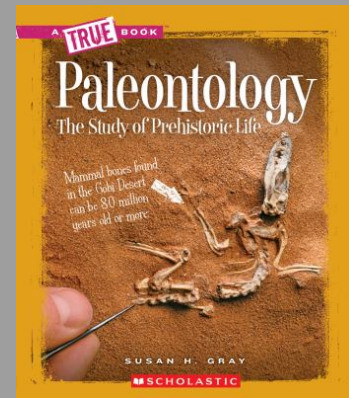


<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/research-collections/archaeology/crsp>

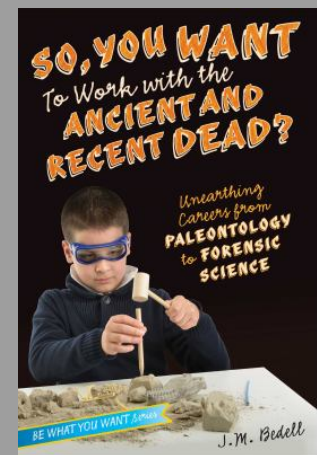


<https://www.hofstra.edu/public-archaeology/archaeology-lab.html>

## Titles to Explore

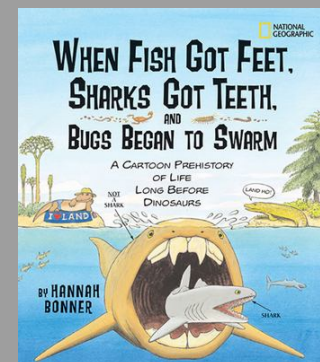


Paleontology the study of prehistoric life  
Gray, Susan Heinrichs.



So, you want to work with the ancient and recent dead? : unearthing careers from paleontology to forensic science

By J. M. Bedell



When fish got feet, sharks got teeth, and bugs began to swarm : a cartoon prehistory of life long before dinosaurs

By Hannah Bonner

## Explore Further

Check out the American Museum of Natural History's Ology page to explore the field of Paleontology through stories, games, hands-on activities and more...!

<https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/paleontology>

