

Clues in Stone

Use fossils to learn about organisms and environments from long ago.

3.12.D "identify fossils as evidence of past living organisms and environments, including common Texas fossils."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle every mention of these named fossil examples: ammonites, petrified wood, dinosaur tracks, and leaf print or leaf prints. Underline the nearby words that tell what each fossil shows about a past organism or environment.

Texas Fossil Clues

- ① Fossils are remains or traces of living things from long ago. A fossil can be a body part, such as a shell or bone. It can also be a trace, such as a footprint or a leaf print. Fossils give scientists clues about organisms that lived long before people. They also give clues about the places where those organisms lived.
- ② Texas has many fossil sites because ancient seas, rivers, forests, and dry lands once covered different parts of the state. Ammonites, coiled sea animals, are common Texas fossils. Their shells tell us that seawater once covered an area. Petrified wood is wood changed to stone. It shows that trees grew in the past, often where water and soil supported a forest.
- ③ At some Texas sites, dinosaur tracks were left in soft mud that later hardened into rock. The tracks are evidence that dinosaurs walked there. A fossil leaf print shows that a plant grew in that place. If scientists find many leaf prints, they know plants were part of the past environment. Scientists use several fossils together to make careful ideas about a place long ago.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are the two kinds of fossils described in paragraph 1? Give one example of each kind.

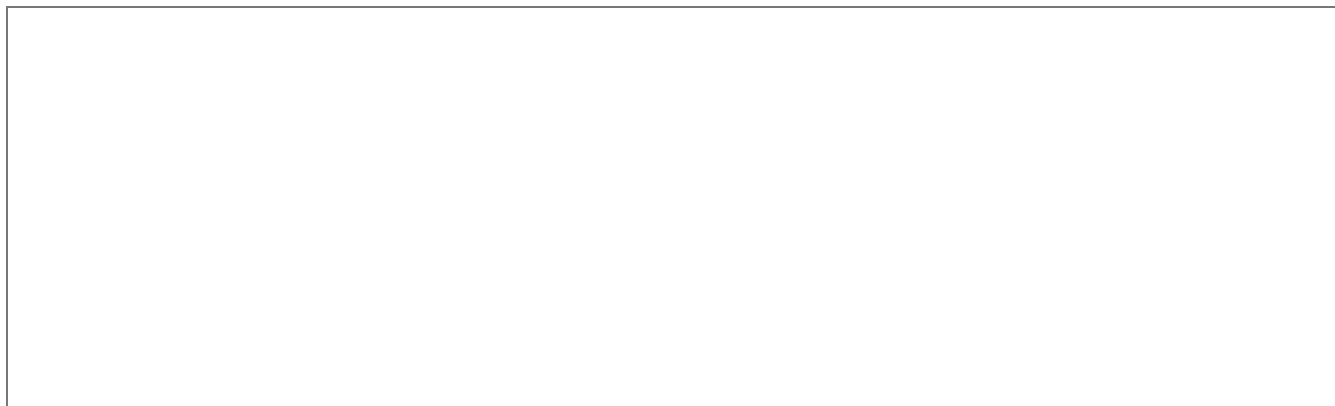
2 What does an ammonite shell tell scientists about a Texas area long ago?

3 What does petrified wood show about a past environment?

4 What evidence do dinosaur tracks and many leaf prints give about one place long ago?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine that you find a fossil fish in a rock layer. Draw the fossil fish and label it. Then write two sentences explaining what it shows about a past organism and its environment.



PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle every mention of these named fossil examples: ammonites, petrified wood, dinosaur tracks, and leaf print or leaf prints. Underline the nearby words that tell what each fossil shows about a past organism or environment. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are the two kinds of fossils described in paragraph 1? Give one example of each kind.	A fossil can be a body part, such as a shell or bone, or a trace, such as a footprint or leaf print.
2	What does an ammonite shell tell scientists about a Texas area long ago?	It tells scientists that seawater once covered the area.
3	What does petrified wood show about a past environment?	It shows that trees grew there in the past, often where water and soil supported a forest.
4	What evidence do dinosaur tracks and many leaf prints give about one place long ago?	Dinosaur tracks show that dinosaurs walked there. Many leaf prints show that plants were part of the past environment.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Label: fossil fish. This fossil is evidence that a fish lived there. The environment had water.

Accept answers that connect the fish fossil to a fish living in the place and to water being part of the environment. The drawing should show and label a fossil fish.