

The Life Story of a Fossil

Imagine yourself as an ancient organism that has ended up as part of the fossil record. Your job is to tell the story of your life and death—who you were, what your world was like, were you a predator or prey, what else lived along side you, etc. Tell your story in words and pictures. Imagine the world around you at that time. How long ago did you live? What was the world like then? What was your scientific name?

After talking about your life, tell us about your death. How did it happen? Remember all the kinds of things that have to happen for an organism to become a fossil. What happened when you died that allowed you to become a fossil? Who discovered your fossil and how did they discover it? Where are you now? Are you in a museum? Are you in a private collection?

You must draw a picture of your fossil.

Try to include the following bulleted information in your story. You will also be graded on how accurate the information is, and how well you use it in your story.

A worksheet is provided to help you record the required information that you find using [The Paleontology Portal online](#) resource and other resources.

It is required that the following information be included in your story:

- The state in which you were found
- The geologic period in which you lived
- How long ago you lived
- The scientific and common name of your organism
- Where you lived - in the air, freshwater, saltwater, on land or some combination of these - include evidence
- The climate and geography during the time that you lived- include evidence
- Were you a carnivore, omnivore, or herbivore? And what evidence is there of that
- Were you a predator or prey? If predator, what organisms did you eat? If prey, what organisms ate you? Include evidence
- What evidence shows that other flora and fauna lived during the same period as you?
- What kind of fossil are you? (Body part? Footprint? Something else?)
- Where is your fossil now located and if known, who found it?

To add to your story, answer the following within your narrative:

Evidence of how you died

Evidence of how you were fossilized

How your fossil was found

Fossilization Story Planner

You are going to write your life, death and fossilization story as if you were an organism found by a present day paleontologist. Choose a fossilized organism or trace fossil from The Paleontology Portal. Your research will be completed using the PaleoPortal, but you may need to find additional facts. The following table will help you keep track of the information you have found while doing your research.

KEY QUESTION	ANSWER	
What is your scientific name? If you have a common name too, what is it?		
What type of fossil are you?		
In what state were you found?		
In what geologic period did you live? How long ago was that?		
Where is your fossil now located? If known, who found you?		
KEY QUESTION	ANSWER	STORY DETAIL / EVIDENCE
What was the geography like in the location where you lived? What evidence could a paleontologist use to know that?		
What was the climate like at the time you were living? What evidence could a paleontologist use to know that?		

KEY QUESTION	ANSWER	STORY DETAIL / EVIDENCE
<p>Did you live in the air, in freshwater, saltwater, on land or a combination of these?</p> <p>What evidence could a paleontologist use to know that?</p>		
<p>Were you a carnivore? An herbivore? An omnivore?</p> <p>Evidence?</p>		
<p>Were you a predator or were you prey?</p> <p>If a predator, what organisms did you prey on? If prey, what organisms ate you?</p> <p>Evidence?</p>		
<p>What other flora and fauna lived during the same time as you?</p> <p>Evidence?</p>		
<p>Where is your fossil now located? If known, who found you?</p>		