



CAVE OF THE MOUNDS®
National Natural Landmark

Create-A-Fossil Investigation

YOU WILL NEED: **fine sand, 2 containers (one for the molds/casts, one to mix plaster), quick-set Plaster of Paris and various items to create molds/casts.**

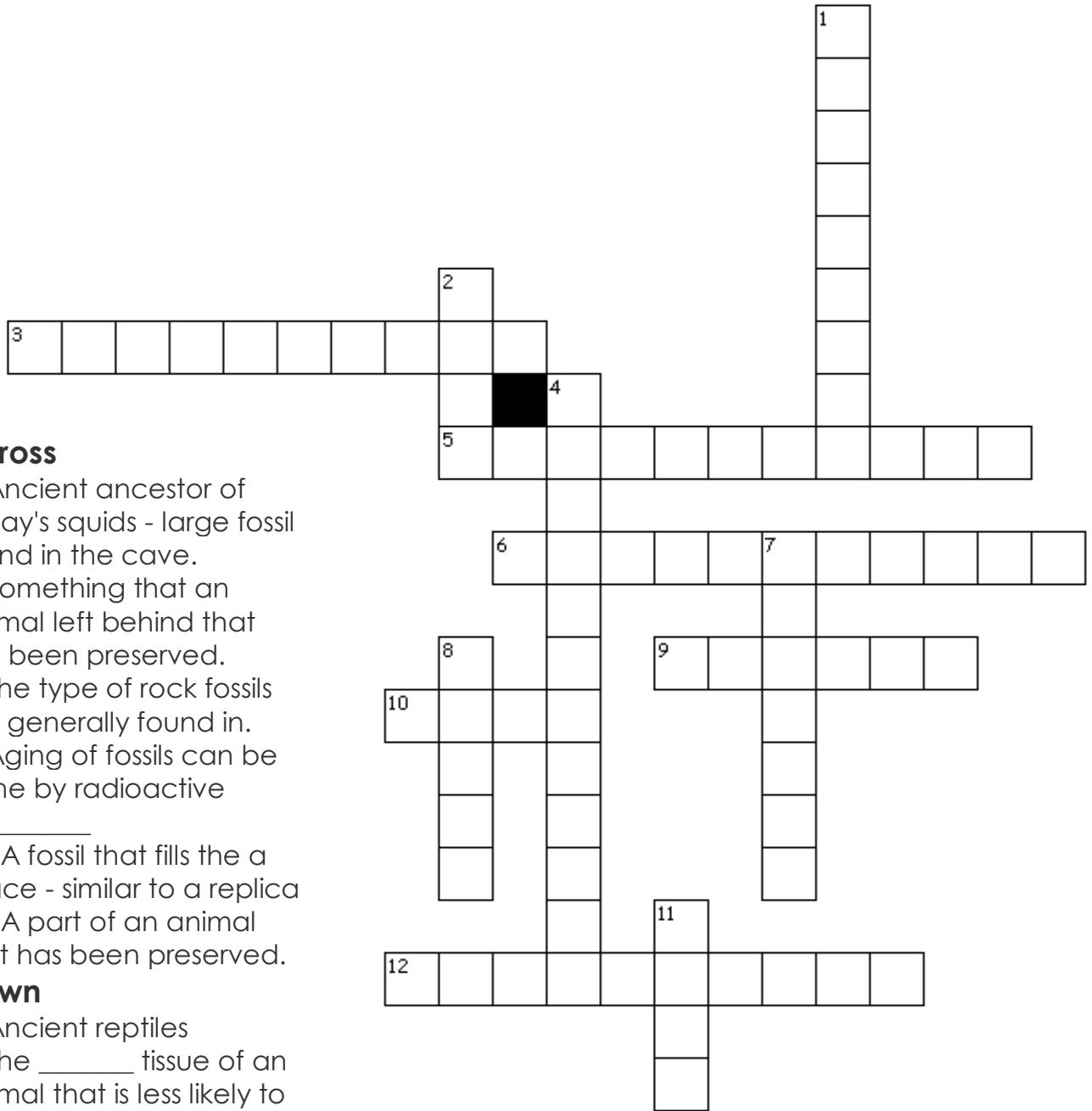
1. Fill 2/3 of your container with moistened sand.
2. Press objects into the moist sand—Leaves, plastic dinosaurs or bugs, shells and twigs; other items with interesting textures work well.
3. With the help of an adult, mix Plaster of Paris and carefully pour into the impressions in the sand.
4. Wait patiently for the plaster to dry to the touch, about 30-40 minutes. Then turn container out onto a flat work surface, remove the excess sand, and let the remaining plaster dry. Finally, whisk away dried sand using a small brush and uncover your creation!



What is a fossil?

Fossils are remains of life from the past preserved in rock. The most common types of fossils are molds and casts. A **mold** forms when something is pressed into soft mud and removed by decomposition or pulled out, leaving an impression of the object. A **cast** is a three-dimensional (3-D) example of an object of the past created when a mold fills up with sediment like mud, sand or volcanic ash.

Paleontology – The Study of Ancient Life



Across

3. Ancient ancestor of today's squids - large fossil found in the cave.
 5. Something that an animal left behind that has been preserved.
 6. The type of rock fossils are generally found in.
 9. Aging of fossils can be done by radioactive

- _____
10. A fossil that fills the a space - similar to a replica
 12. A part of an animal that has been preserved.

Down

1. Ancient reptiles
 2. The _____ tissue of an animal that is less likely to be preserved.
 4. The study of ancient life and fossils.
 7. Having died out.
 8. A single bed of rock.
 11. A fossilized impression made in a rock

Fossil Quiz

Fill in the blanks using the given word bank:

1. _____ is the study of ancient life and fossils.
2. Rocks and _____ replacing an animal is a form of fossil creation.
3. _____ fossils are created from what an animal leaves behind.
4. Fossils are _____ remains which form from an animal.
5. An organism with _____ parts is more likely to fossilize.
6. A _____ is a fossilized impression made in a rock.
7. When a part of an animal fossilizes, it is known as a _____ fossil.
8. A _____ is a fossil that fills the space and is similar to a replica.

Word Bank

Hard

Body

Paleontology

Cast

Trace

Minerals

Mold

Preserved

Paleontology – The Study of Ancient Life

Q E Y B I W X L G C P C Y D Q R T P W L
O S L K V S D I E E I K G B I E G K E O
A W V Q X X Q P T O O H B U U M X F T R
L J V X O O H Q Z N C L I K B A Z L I G
K L S W N A M O P G L T O V P I S M B I
I X S M L T E N W N I X O G H N X T O L
E E P O S L T I D K X M A Q I S L M L N
Y G P K A G T M W O L N F E B C C J I D
E O A P A Y R O E P P B M M O K T A R G
D F R E S C A L I S S O F Y D O B I T H
U L T Y C L C B J U O P R L Y O K B M J
M C W P H I E O C F J Z R T V X C K D E
S O P E X I F O A V R J O Y S C B A Z C
N F U T U X O T J I J S R I R A D W V D
W U R C F L S S W I C B J Y C L G G I C
H Q F H O P S A H N W U H S O V Q G C Z
S R E Y A L I C H O W G Y M J B S T K N
J B E M W I L B X T T W I W F I I X X G
A P P G C G E Z Q Q H F R R T V Q I E K
P A L E O N T O L O G Y C E N E Z O I C

BODY FOSSIL
CAST
CENEZOIC
CEPHALOPOD
DIG SITE
GASTROPOD
GEOLOGIC TIME
ICEAGE

LAYERS
MESOZOIC
MOLD
PALEONTOLOGY
PALEOZOIC
REMAINS
TRACE FOSSIL
TRILOBITE

Fossil Quiz Answers

- | | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 1. Paleontology | 5. Hard |
| 2. Minerals | 6. Mold |
| 3. Trace | 7. Body |
| 4. Preserved | 8. Cast |

Crossword Puzzle Answers

Across

3. Cephalopod
5. Trace Fossil
6. Sedimentary
9. Dating
10. Cast
12. Body Fossil

Down

1. Dinosaurs
2. Soft
4. Paleontology
7. Extinct
8. Layer
11. Mold