

Excavate a Trilobite Fossil



Trilobites are a group of organisms that lived in the Paleozoic Era (at least 250 million years ago - before the dinosaurs). They were arthropods - like insects, crustaceans or arachnids - with a hard exoskeleton, bodies divided into three segments and jointed appendages. They are fascinating and if you are interested, you should read more about them. Today you learned about paleontology, and trilobites are one of the most common fossils to be found by paleontologists.

- Step 1: Locate the following materials in your camp kit:
 - A plastic bag including a sharp two-pronged fork and a trilobite fossil (looks like a rock)
- Step 2: Find a place to excavate where you can leave some dirt behind. Outdoors is probably the best place so you don't need to clean up a mess.
- Step 3: Use the metal fork-like utensil to pick away the hard dirt that has developed around the fossil.
- Step 4: When the fossil is exposed, carefully remove as much dirt as you can, revealing the trilobite. You can even wash it in warm water to remove the remaining dirt
- Step 5: Examine the trilobite closely. Do you have an idea of what it might have looked like when it was alive? Can you determine where the three segments of its body are? Draw a picture of what you think the trilobite would have looked like with jointed legs and antennae.