

Make a Fossil From Glue!

Your fifth grader will be learning all about fossils this year. Fossils are ancient plant, animal and microbe life that lived in the distant past preserved in stone. You can make your own fossils at home with a little modeling clay and glue.

What You Need:

- White glue
- Modeling clay
- Seashell or other hard natural objects like bones, or small tree branches

What You Do:

1. Have your child collect 2-3 objects like seashells, bones, tree limbs, etc.
2. Place one of the selected objects on a flat surface like a table top. Press the clay into the object. The impression should not be too deep (the deeper the impression, the longer it will take for the glue to dry).
3. Slowly and carefully pull the object out of the clay. Try not to have the clay stretch or smear when you remove the object. The impression of the object in the clay forms a “mold” of the object even if the object is gone.
4. Next, take white glue and fill in the mold. In a real fossil when animals rot beneath the soil, the space they filled can be filled with minerals from groundwater. The glue is like those minerals.
5. Let the glue dry. The time it takes to dry depends on the depth of the impression.
6. When the glue has dried, peel back the glue shape from the clay. The glue shape is a “cast” of the object. Many fossils are preserved as casts and molds. Sometimes there is excess glue around the “fossil.” Cut away the excess glue with your fingers or scissors. Many natural fossils have excess material around them and have to be cleaned to see the original fossil.



Follow up this activity with a trip to your local science museum so that they can see a real fossil!

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