

## LESSON 15

# MAKE YOUR FOSSILS

*In this lab, you get to make your own fossils from household items and craft supplies, but not all fossils are made in the same manner. This lab explores different methods of fossil creation.*

## Supplies

- ✂ 1 cup water
- ✂ 2 kitchen sponges
- ✂ Small pot
- ✂ Food coloring
- ✂ Small natural item like a twig, clean bone, seashell, green leaf, etc.
- ✂ White glue
- ✂ Stove
- ✂ Small dish\*
- ✂ ½ cup Epsom salt
- ✂ Modeling clay

*\*Any household dish that is large enough the sponge can fit in, but small enough it can be completely submerged in 1 cup of water.*

## Instructions

### Part 1

1. Cut two kitchen sponges into similarly sized bone shapes.
2. Place one sponge in a small dish. Set the other sponge to the side.
3. Measure out 1 cup of water and heat on the stove. Bring the water almost to a boil and then add 8 tablespoons of Epsom salt.
4. Stir the solution until all the salt is dissolved, until there is no salt visible in the solution.
5. Add food coloring to the water and remove from heat.
6. Carefully pour the saltwater solution over your sponge in the dish until the entire sponge is covered. Don't use more water than you need to cover it.
7. Leave the dish uncovered for several days in a safe place so the water can fully evaporate.

8. Once the sponge is fully dry, compare the two sponges. Cut both of them in half to examine the inside of each.

## Part 2

1. Find a small item like a twig, clean bone, seashell, or leaf for this activity.
2. Soften and flatten your modeling clay, making sure the clay is at least twice the depth of the object you've selected.
3. Press the small natural object into the clay so it leaves a clear imprint of the object. Carefully remove the object from the clay so the imprint is not disturbed.
4. Fill this imprint with white glue.
5. Wait at least 24 hours and gently remove the now dried glue from the imprint.

## Questions

1. After the water evaporated, what mineral is now crystalized inside the first sponge? What is the difference between the two sponges?

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2. If the pieces of sponge were to vanish some day, leaving behind a fossil of these minerals, what process of fossilization would have been used?

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3. With the glue fossil, what does the clay represent? What does the glue represent?

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4. What sort of fossil was created with the glue? \_\_\_\_\_