

What is a Fossil?

Choose a fossil:

- 1) Visit: <https://tinyurl.com/EPICC-photos>
- 2) Choose a fossil photo
- 3) Copy and paste the photo into a document or print it out to use for the exercise.
Write your answers in your field notebook.

Look at the fossil and describe what you see:

- 1) Is there any rock visible on top of or near your fossil? What evidence supports your claim? If there is a rock, draw a picture of the fossil and the rock, showing the differences in texture, color and other features.
- 2) Does your fossil have symmetry? What type of symmetry does it have? What evidence supports your claim? Draw a dotted line dividing the symmetrical parts of the organism.
- 3) Does your fossil have ridges, segments or another pattern? What evidence supports your claim? Count the ridges or segments and write down that number. If your fossil has another pattern, draw the pattern.
- 4) Does your fossil have any damage such as broken or missing pieces? What evidence supports your claim? If your fossil does have damage describe what may have happened to cause the damage, either before the organism was fossilized, during fossilization, or after it was exposed on the Earth's surface.

Classify your fossil:

- 5) Is your fossil made up of one or multiple living pieces? What evidence supports your claim?
- 6) Does your fossil look like any living thing you have seen before? What evidence supports your claim?
- 7) Is your fossil an invertebrate, a plant, a vertebrate or a trace fossil? What evidence supports your claim?
- 8) If your fossil is an invertebrate, is it a bivalve, echinoid, coral, gastropod, arthropod or none of these? What evidence supports your claim?
- 9) Optional: use a guide from your teacher to narrow the name of your fossil down even more.
- 10) Optional: On the website with your fossil photo, click on "view details" to see where your fossil was collected. Use the [USGS Geologic Maps Database](#) to find out what rock formations are present in that location. The age of the rocks in the area may narrow down your search for the fossil name.