

Fossil Tracks



Materials Needed:

- Soft modeling clay
- Tyrannosaurus and Triceratops footprint template (*below right*)
- Scissors
- Pencil with eraser

Instructions:

1. Reproduce footprint template for each child, then have them trace and cut out their footprints.
2. Have children flatten a tangerine size lump of modeling clay into pancake shape. *This piece of clay should be larger than the footprints.*
3. Put paper footprint on top of the pancake shaped modeling clay. Have the children use their fingers or the eraser side of a pencil to tap around the edges and over the surface of each footprint, pressing into the modeling clay.
4. Carefully remove the paper.
5. Discuss what the children notice about each footprint:
 - How many toes do you see on each foot?*
 - Which footprint is bigger?*
 - Can you think of any other animals that would make a footprint like these footprints?*
 - How does their hand and feet compare to these footprints?*
 - Where can you find tracks around their house or playground?*
 - What do those tracks tell us about the animals in our neighborhoods?*

Extensions:

Use clay that hardens so that children can keep their fossil footprints.

Take a group of Tyrannosaurus tracks and make a trackway. Discuss how footprints should be placed in their trackways.

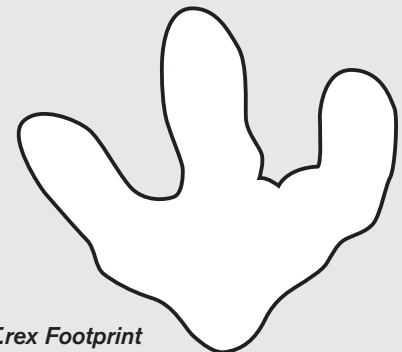
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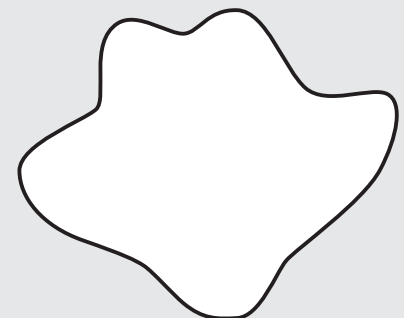
What We've Learned

Dinosaur Tracks are a type of trace fossil. Trace fossils are signs of ancient life other than the body of an animal (*or plant*). Tracks, coprolites, and animal burrows are all examples of trace fossils which provide important clues about the lives of ancient animals. A trackway can tell scientists how an animal stood and moved, finding multiple trackways together can tell scientists that a certain animal lived or travelled in groups. Coprolites can tell scientists what an animal ate; some of our biggest questions about ancient life can only be answered by trace fossils!

Fossil Tracks Template



T.rex Footprint



Triceratops Footprint