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EarthComm Earth System Evolution: Changing Life and Your Community, Activity 1

This investigation will help you to:

- Food Chains and Food Webs
- What is a Fossil?
- Fossilization
- Fossiliferous Rocks
- To learn more about taphonomy and forensic science, visit the following web sites:
- To learn more about common geological settings for preservation, visit the following web site:

Food Chains and Food Webs

- Food Chains and Webs, Marietta College
  This college web site provides information on the the food chain and the complexity of food webs. Information on the relationship to biomass and trophic levels is also explored.

Back to Top

What is a Fossil?

- Fossils and Rocks, Fossils, Rocks and Time, USGS
  A section in this online publication, this page provides a little background to how studying fossils became an important part of understanding geologic time.
- Voyages through Time, Seti
  This is an integrated curriculum for middle and high school based on the theme of Evolution and delivered on CD-ROM. Through a variety of lab- and computer-based research activities complemented by scientific reference databases, image libraries and videos, this curriculum takes student on a journey from the origin of the universe, planets and life, and the evolution of technology.

Back to Top

Fossilization

- Fossilization
  See this animation of a brachiopod becoming a fossil.

Back to Top

Fossiliferous Rocks

- Mazon Creek Fossils, Illinois State Museum
  The plants and animals found in concretions recovered from the Francis Creek Shale are some of the most exciting and important fossils that have been found in the state of Illinois. These fossils are known as the Mazon Creek fossils, because they were originally found along Mazon Creek in northeastern Illinois. This exhibit shows some of the more interesting and dramatic types of fossils recovered from these remarkable deposits.

Back to Top

To learn more about taphonomy and forensic science, visit the following web sites:

- A Brief Introduction to Taphonomy, Colby College
  This articles details what, how, and why different organisms are fossilized.
- Taphonomy and Preservation, SUNY Cortland
  The text includes a similar to other discussions, the page also features a table that summarizes different taphonomic indicators and their paleoenvironmental implications. At the bottom of the page, there is a link to a separate article about preservation.
- Career Brochure, American Academy of Forensic Sciences
  Learn about different careers in the forensic sciences.
- Young Forensic Scientists Forum (YFSF)
  The Young Forensic Scientists Forum (YFSF) is a group within the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) that is dedicated to the education, enrichment and development of emerging forensic scientists and future leaders of the field.

Back to Top

To learn more about common geological settings for preservation, visit the following web site:

- Preservation and Bias in the Fossil Record, University of California at Davis
  Considering that "Hardly any substances were selected for their properties after death," it is remarkable what we know about organisms that lived millions of years ago. Find out more about why the depositional setting that is the organism's final resting place is important if the organism is to become part of the fossil record.

Back to Top
