



Fossils Under Our Feet

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Noah clutched the brown paper bag in his hands. It was his second week at school and his turn for “show and tell.”

Noah opened the bag and pulled out something small and oddly shaped. “Last summer at the beach, I was digging in the sand near some rocky cliffs and found this.”







“Is it a seashell? Or maybe a fancy rock?” Sarah asked, waving her hand in the air.

Miles cried out, “I know what that is! It’s a fossil. But what kind of fossil is it?”

“I’m not sure,” Noah said, “but I have a great idea.”





“May we try to find it in one of our science books, Ms. Miller?” asked Noah. A few of the students looked up from their desks.

“Of course,” Ms. Miller replied. “You may check the bookshelf to see what you can find.”





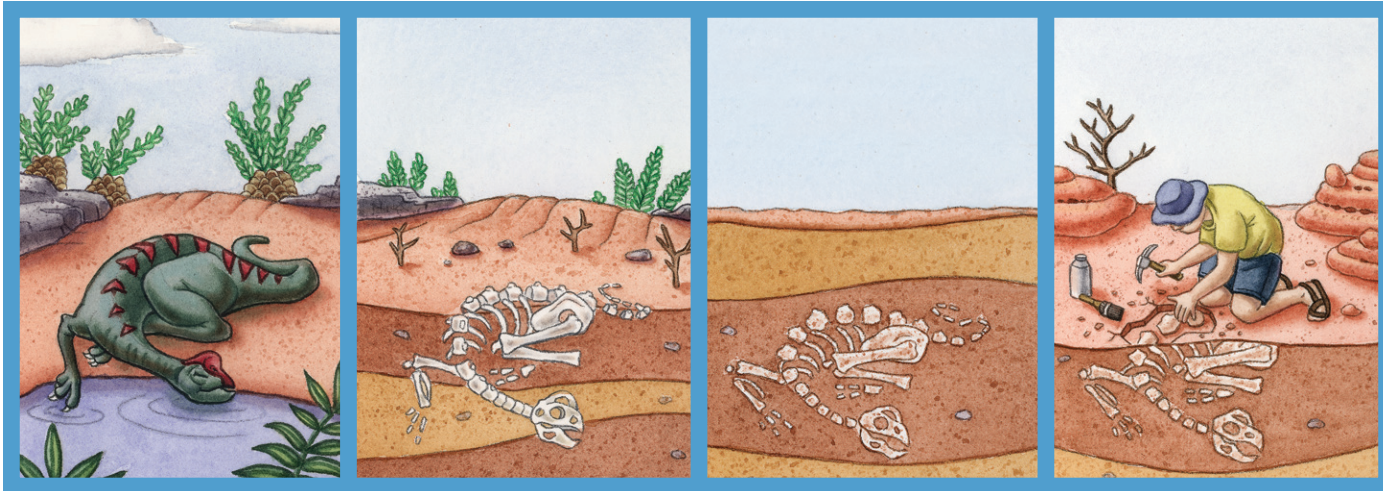
Noah and several other students went to the science bookshelf and began searching. Noah exclaimed, “I found a book that’s perfect. It’s all about fossils.”

A few more students left their seats to look at Noah’s book. “It even shows how fossils are made,” said Miles.

Noah read aloud, “When animals die their soft parts, like skin and fur, slowly fall off. They decay, or rot. Shells, bones, and teeth stay because they are harder.”







Noah kept reading. “Sediment is sand or dirt that settles in a liquid. Sediment slowly covers the hard parts. After many years the sediment hardens into rock.”



“My book explains it, too!” Sarah interrupted. “Rock presses down and water drips through small cracks. The shells, bones, and teeth slowly wash away. They leave a hollow space called a mold. Minerals from water collect in the mold and slowly harden into a fossil.”



Miles read aloud, “Scientists find fossils all over the world. They study many kinds of fossils—bones, footprints, eggs, and even bugs.”

Now all the students were looking at the books. Miles pointed to the pictures and said, “Here’s a dinosaur bone fossil. And here are footprints—and eggs, too.”





Noah asked, “But what about my fossil? It doesn’t look like a dinosaur bone, a footprint, or an egg.”

Miles turned the page.

“Here are pictures of fossils made from plants,” said Sarah.

“My fossil isn’t a plant,” said Noah, as he turned the page.





“Look at that!” said Miles. “There are bugs that were trapped in tree sap. I didn’t know that insects were fossils.”

“I still don’t see Noah’s fossil,” said Sarah. “Let’s try the next page.”



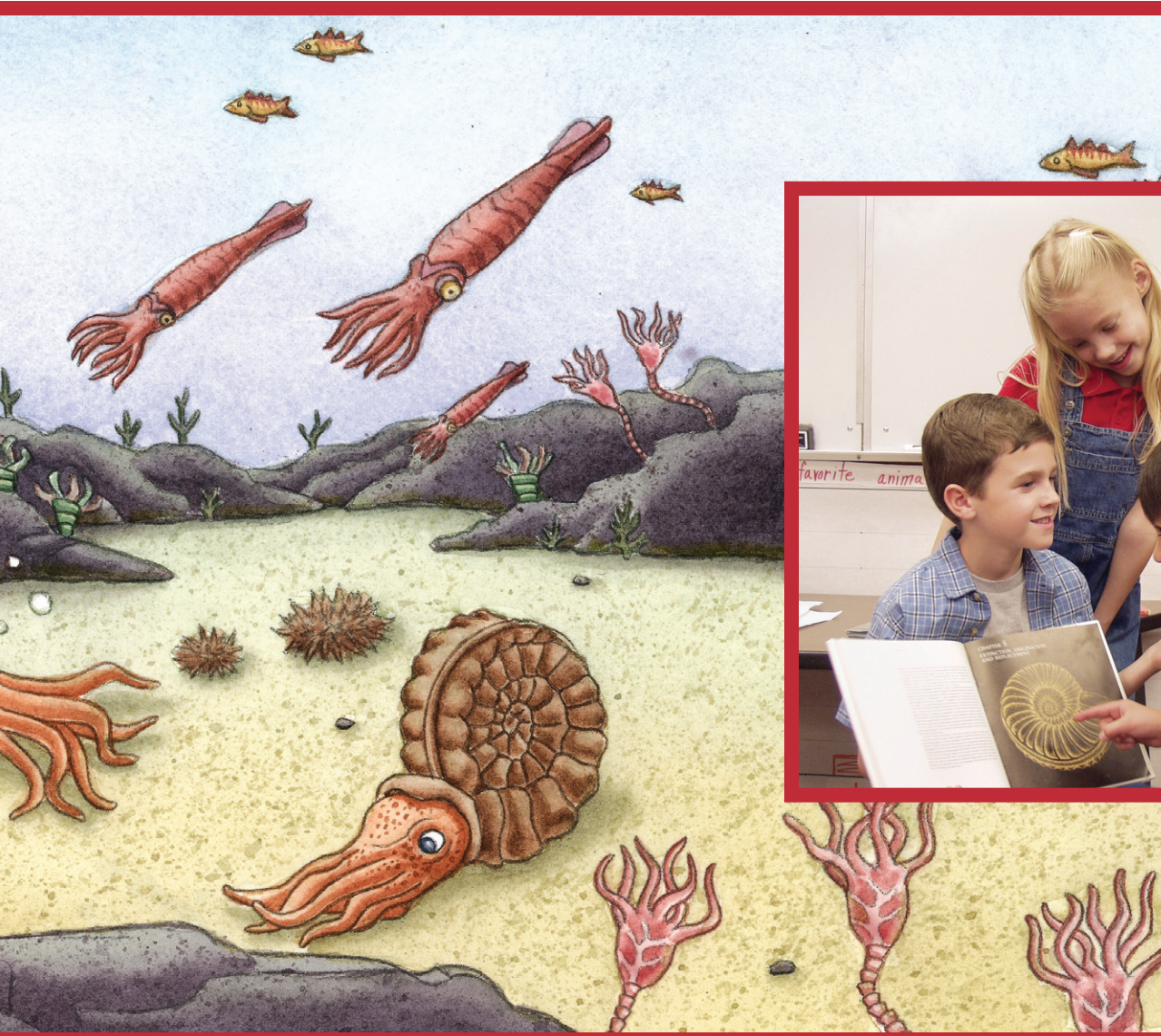


Miles pointed to a shell on the page. “That’s it! We found Noah’s fossil,” he exclaimed.

Sarah read aloud, “It’s an ammonite (AM-uh-nite). Wow! It lived a long time ago.”

“And that’s a really big ammonite,” said Noah. “My fossil is smaller. It must have come from a little ammonite.”







Sarah looked up from the book. “I wish I lived near the beach so I could find a fossil.”



“You don’t have to live near the beach,” Ms. Miller said. “Scientists find fossils all over the world, so fossils must be nearly everywhere.”
“There might be fossils under our feet right now!” Noah said.





Miles said, “I think we should start a fossil collection for our classroom.”

“We can find their names by looking in our books,” said Sarah.

“And my ammonite can be the very first one,” Noah said, placing his fossil in a box.



Math & Science

Fossils

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