

# fossil plaster art project

**WHAT IS A FOSSIL?** Generally, the evidence of once living things from an ancient geological age that are preserved as remains, impressions, or traces. Natural molds are created when ancient life sinks to the bottom of a lake or ocean. Sediment and silt build up over the deceased organism which decays and disappears leaving a void that is a “copy” of that organism. Overtime, minerals fill the void and harden, creating a cast of that life form.

## MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Plaster of Paris
- sand
- water
- box or restaurant to-go container
- measuring cup
- plastic mixing bowl or bucket
- plastic fork for stirring
- objects to cast (seashells for example).

After dry, can be worked with sandpaper or a wet sponge, and tinted by brush with watercolor or diluted acrylic paint.



## BASIC STEPS:

1. Fill the bottom of your container with about 2 inches of sand. Pour water over sand until very wet, but not pooling on the surface.
2. Press your objects deeply, yet carefully into the wet sand and remove. Where the object once was will eventually be filled with wet plaster to create your fossil!
3. Mix plaster according to package instructions. Two parts plaster and one-part water. Mix thoroughly, no clumps allowed! Plaster should have consistency of pancake batter at first. How much plaster used depends on the size of the intended project.
4. Carefully pour wet plaster into the nooks and crannies of your mold and level off. Leave any unused plaster in the plastic mixing container. Plaster will be hard enough to remove from the mold in about 20 minutes, but fully cures over a couple of days.
5. Carefully remove the hardened cast plaster from mold. Brush off remaining sand with a damp sponge. You can now add watercolor or diluted acrylic paint if you'd like! When cleaning up, remember to not pour wet plaster down the sink!



Tip! If you wish to hang the finished fossil, knot the two ends of a piece of picture hanging wire into the wet plaster. When hardened, the wire will remain in place!

## DID YOU KNOW?

In our area, the famous fossil beds at the Falls of the Ohio State Park there are fossils of marine organisms that lived nearly **400 MILLION YEARS AGO!**

**ENJOY YOUR OWN PLASTER FOSSIL! SHARE YOUR WORK BY TAGGING US ON FACEBOOK (FACEBOOK.COM/NACARNEGIE) OR INSTAGRAM (CCAH\_NA)!**



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