Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Create Your Own Beach Fossil

The coast is a dynamic environment, constantly changing due to winds, waves, and the effects of tides and currents.

Have you ever stood on the beach on a windy day and felt the sand stinging the back of your legs? This is an example of a changing coastline caused by wind.

Have you been dumped in the surf and had your bathers fill up with sand? This is an example of a changing coastline caused by water.

As well as moving sand, these processes also change the shape of rocks, sometimes revealing evidence of the past in the form of fossils. Fossils are the remains, moulds or traces of once living organisms and some of the oldest fossils are from marine life!

Try making your own beach fossil!

MATERIALS

Plaster of Paris

Water

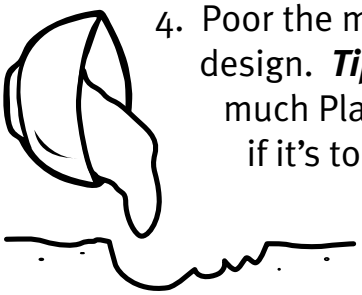
Shells and other items you have found on the beach.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dig a small, shallow hole in the sand. ***Tip:*** it helps if the sand is a little bit wet, but remember – don't get too close to the water's edge!

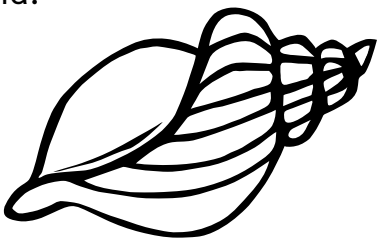
2. Choose some shells and other items you've found on the beach and press them into the wet sand to create your design. ***Tip:*** don't forget to remove the shells and items once they have made the pattern in the sand.

3. Mix the Plaster of Paris with water (follow the instructions on the packet).



4. Poor the mixture over your design. ***Tip:*** don't use too much Plaster of Paris... if it's too thick it will take too long to dry!

5. Once the Plaster of Paris is dry, remove your beach fossil from the sand!



Look for shells that have been buried within the rocks, or tree trunks and roots that have been fossilised!