

Objectives

- Students will describe a process.
- Students will discuss the importance of animal tracks and fossil tracks.
- Students will learn to gather and record data.

Materials

- Inquiry Journal, pp. 95–96
- Reading Transparency 55
- Sand-castings
- Research Assistant



Teacher Tip DESCRIBE A PROCESS Have students determine their purpose for listening.



www.sra4kids.com
Web Connection

More information about Fossils and links to Web sites
<http://www.sra4kids.com>

INVESTIGATION

Investigating Concepts Beyond the Text

Choose from these activities those which you feel will help students add to their investigation questions.

Describe a Process

Have students practice giving clear and precise descriptions by describing how they made the sand castings described in “Monster Tracks.” Tell students to pretend that a partner knows nothing about how fossils are made. Have them use their sand castings to describe the process by which plant and animal remains can become fossils. Have the listener retell the sequence, or the process, in the appropriate order. Have the listener tell what the final steps are in the process. Then have students switch roles.

When the students have completed this process, have them check anything they have written for their research reports to see whether their explanations are clear and precise.

Animal Tracks

Remind the students that the name of this selection is “Monster Tracks” and that some fossils are tracks or footprints that have turned to stone. Scientists have used fossilized tracks to obtain information about prehistoric animals.

Tell students that hikers, scouts, hunters, and persons involved in nature and conservation use animal tracks to gather important information. Encourage the students to discuss what tracks can tell about an animal and its ways, allowing the students to come up with their own ideas. (*Student insights might include how tracks can help identify an animal. Tracks can show which direction an animal was traveling, whether it was running, whether it was carrying something, and so on.*)

Then have the students comment on what scientists can learn from fossilized tracks of animals that lived long ago. The students might mention that tracks can show the geographic location of certain kinds of animals, the weight of the animal, or the type of environment they lived in—such as water or caves. Then have them complete *Inquiry Journal*, page 95.

Name _____ Date _____

Fossils UNIT 4

Track Tales

Tracks can tell many things about an animal. Write three things that you can learn by looking at an animal's tracks. Sample answers are provided. Accept all correct answers based on “Let's Go Dinosaur Tracking!”

- How big the animal was _____
- How heavy the animal was _____
- How fast the animal was walking or running _____

Write three things that a scientist can learn about prehistoric animals by looking at track fossils.

- How long ago the animal lived _____
- How big the animal was _____
- How fast it could run _____

Inquiry Journal • Track Tales UNIT 4 95

Inquiry Journal p. 95