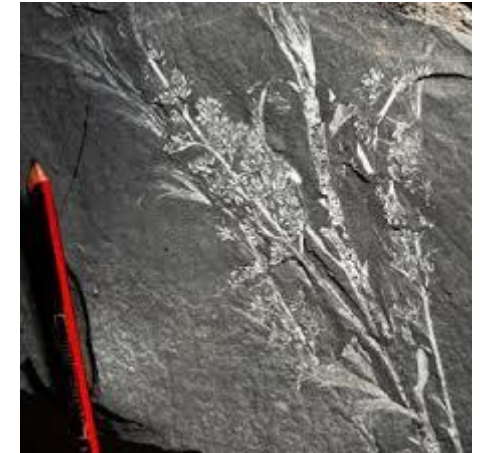


Fossils.

Some animals and plants that lived long ago have been preserved as fossils in sedimentary rocks and many are found here in South Africa.

These fossils tell us a lot about what they looked like and how they lived long ago.



Fossils found in sedimentary rocks.

Fossils are the remains of ancient plants and animals that lived millions of years ago, and they are usually found preserved in sedimentary rocks. The plants and animals that live today are often very different to those that lived millions of years ago. Fossils of these animals in rocks, is the only way in which we can tell that they lived and then became extinct over time.



Plant fossils



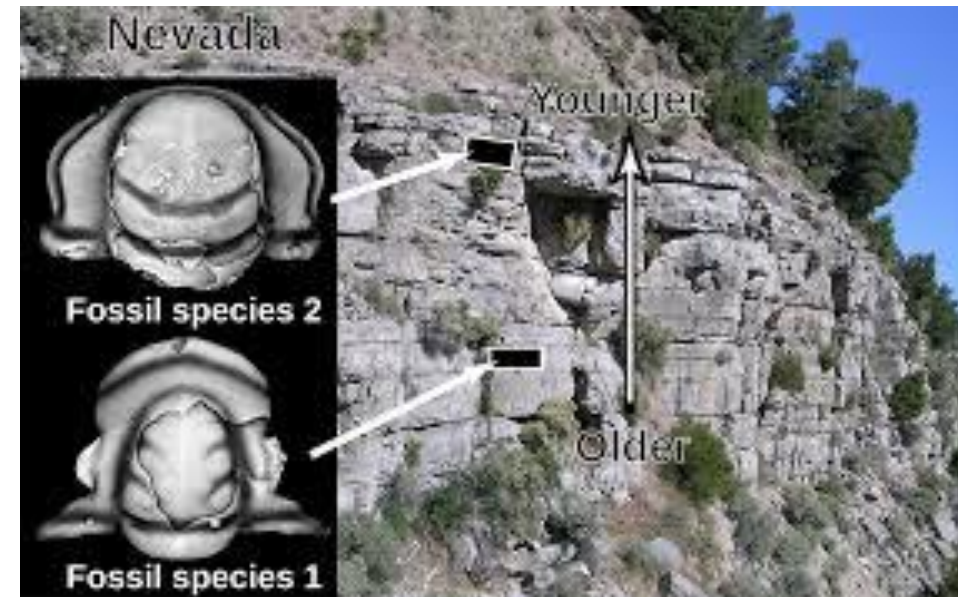
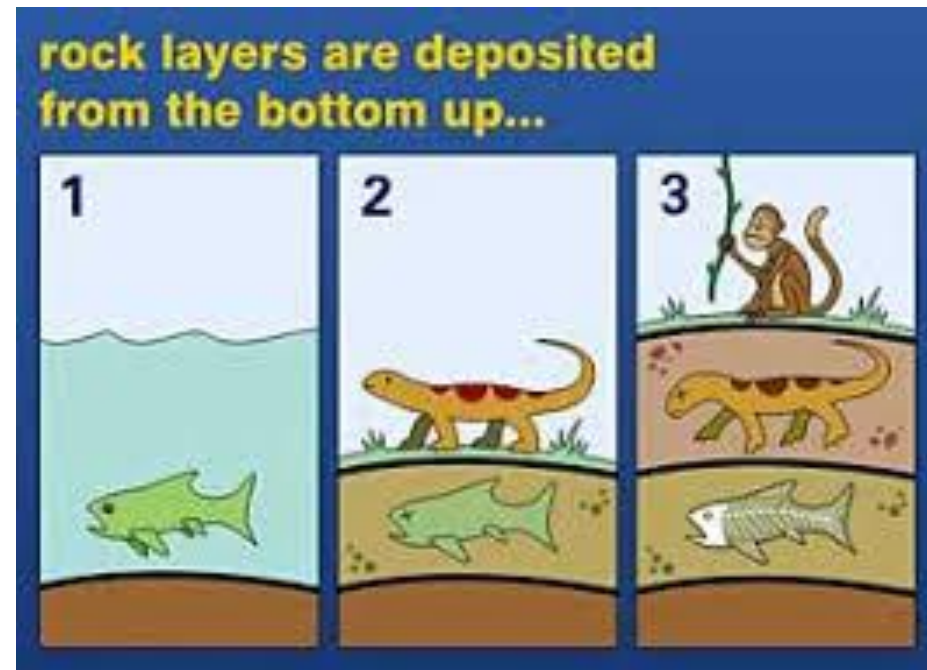
Animal fossils

Human fossils

How fossils form.

When layers of sand, mud and clay form on top of organisms at the bottom of lakes and seas, these may be preserved in the sedimentary rocks as fossils over thousands of years – oldest at bottom and youngest at the top.

From the positions of the fossils, we know that reptiles lived before mammals and plants with cones, before flowering plants and long before the first humans on Earth.

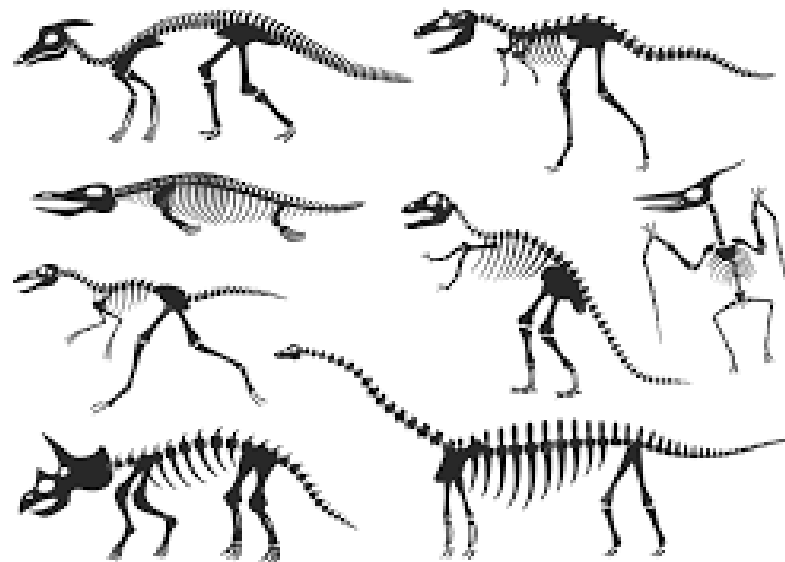


Fossils are proof of existence of extinct animals and plants.

Fossils and where they are found in the different sedimentary stone layers, is the only way scientists can establish the existence of dinosaurs, the woolly mammoth and other animals & plants existed many millions of years ago.

Here are some of the different dinosaur fossils that have been found over many years of research and digging.

Without them we would know very little about dinosaurs.



Body fossils.

Body fossils are preserved body parts of a plant or animal. These can be bones, teeth, shells, leaves, stems or seeds. They tell about the body structure of the animal or plant. Muscles or skin rot away & only hard parts are left.

These fossils have been discovered in rocks and indicate that these lived a long time ago and scientists can estimate where & when they lived on Earth.



Shell fossil



Plant fossil



Monkey fossil



T-Rex fossil



Animal skeleton fossil