Fossils are very useful to humans because we can use them to find out about **organisms** (living things) that lived millions of years ago. Scientists called **palaeontologists** use the evidence in the fossil record to build up a picture of the past.

Some of the questions that palaeontologists ask include:

What can we see?

Palaeontologists make a sensible guess as to what the organism looked like based on what they see.

How deep was the fossil found?

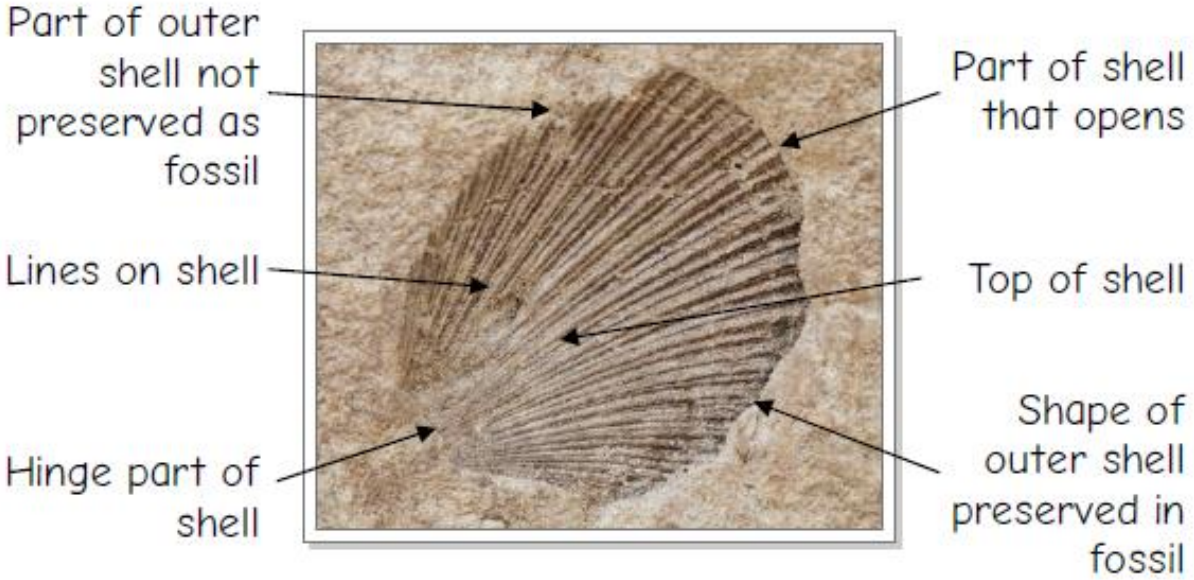
Fossils are formed when loose material forms sedimentary rock on top of dead organisms. More ancient fossils are usually found deeper underground and more recent fossils are found above them.

What has been preserved and what has been lost?

It is rare for a fossil to be formed, and it is even rarer for a fossil of a whole organism to be found. Palaeontologists often need to guess what the whole organism looked like based on what has been preserved.

Activity

On the following pages, you will find pictures of 4 different fossils. What can you see? Label each fossil. Make a sensible guess as to what the organism looked like when it was alive, and draw a labelled diagram underneath. Here is an example to help you.



Fossil 1

Label this fossil.

Draw a labelled picture of what you think the organism looked like when it was alive.

Fossil 2

Label this fossil.

Draw a labelled picture of what you think the organism looked like when it was alive.

Fossil 3

Label this fossil.

Draw a labelled picture of what you think the organism looked like when it was alive.

Fossil 4

Label this fossil.

Draw a labelled picture of what you think the organism looked like when it was alive.