



Royal Mail

FOSSIL HUNTERS OF THE PAST

AGE RANGE: Primary

This exercise will allow children to make historical investigations and will also develop their mapping and geographical skills.

TIME: 40 minutes.

CURRICULUM LINKS: History, Geography, English, ICT, Mathematics, Science.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This section of the pack will involve children in a variety of different activities, and it will give them the chance to look in depth at the career of probably one of our finest fossil hunters, Victorian palaeontologist Mary Anning. It also includes information on Richard Owen who founded the Natural History Museum. It will then provide them with the opportunity to investigate where dinosaur fossils have been found in the UK.

It is important that children make their own investigations and use a variety of sources including the internet, the school library and local and national resources to carry out their research.



MARY ANNING

Mary Anning was born in Lyme Regis, Dorset on the Jurassic Coast in 1799. She discovered her first dinosaur remains with her brother Joseph when she was just twelve years old. Mary Anning's work on fossils helped to change the way people think about our world. When she was alive people knew very little about prehistoric times.

Famous scientists came to see her in Lyme Regis as she was very poor and was unable to travel. Her first discovery with her brother was an Ichthyosaurus, which was thought to be a cross between a crocodile and a fish. Mary Anning made her living by discovering fossils in the Lyme Regis area.



RICHARD OWEN

Richard Owen who started the Natural History Museum in London, realised that many of these creatures were so different from the reptiles of the day that they needed a name of their own. He called them 'Dinosauria', derived from the Greek words meaning 'powerful reptile/lizard'. The first models were then designed by Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins and exhibited at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1854, seven years after the death of Mary Anning.

Other investigators include Elizabeth Philpott, Gideon Mantell and Dean William Buckland, who were also researching other prehistoric creatures.



Dinosaur remains have been found all over the country including:

- Lyme Regis ,Dorset (*Ichthyosuarus*, *Plesiosaurus*, *Dimorphodon*)
- Stonesfield Quarry, Witney, Oxfordshire (*Megalosaurus*)
- Chipping Norton (*Cetiosaurus*)
- Isle of Wight (*Polacanthus*, *Hypsilophodon*)
- Wallis Wood, Ockley, Dorking (*Baryonyx*, *Iguanodon*)
- Tilgate Forest, West Sussex, Cuckfield (*Ornithocheirus*)

ACTIVITY

After talking about Mary Anning and the other fossil hunters, use the newspaper template provided and ask the children to write a short piece on Mary Anning and her achievements. Imagine that they are the local Lyme Regis reporter and have been sent to interview her after her first find, for an article in the paper entitled 'Local Girl Finds Fossil.'

The second part of this activity involves plotting the location of the other fossil finds on a map of the UK. The children will need to pinpoint the sites and then mark them on the map.

LOWER

Imagine that you were Mary on her first fossil hunting trip. Make a list of what she might have taken with her and a set of five rules that she would have needed to follow e.g. 'Be careful when climbing over rocks.'

ADVANCED

Investigate further some of the other fossil hunters mentioned and also Robert Owen, the founder of the Natural History Museum. Write a short biography on each one.

FURTHER IDEAS

- Produce a set of drawings and list the equipment you might need if you decided to go fossil hunting.
- Using the set of five rules you've previously developed (or create a separate list of do's and don'ts for fossil hunters), use this information to design a fossil hunting poster.
- See if there are any groups in your area that go fossil hunting. A good place to start your investigation might be the local library. If there are, invite them in to talk about their hobby.
- Investigate other dinosaur sites around the world including Washington State in the USA and Mongolia.
- Draw some pictures of early fossil hunters. Remember many of them were alive during Victorian Times.
- Make up a short play about the first time Mary found some dinosaur remains.
- Find out more about Lyme Regis and the local museums and why it is such a good place for finding fossils. Design a brochure to promote the area.

