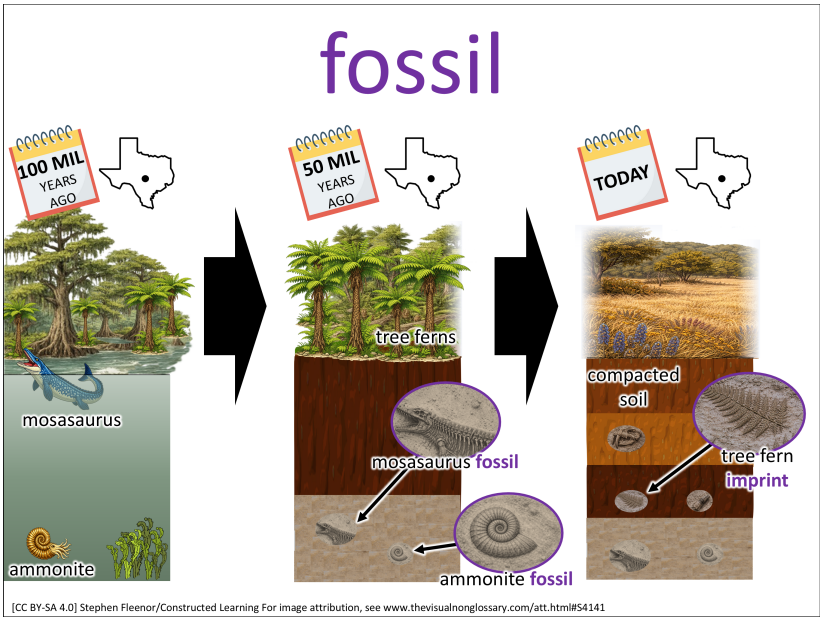
The Visual Non-Glossary™

Clues from the Past

The purpose for reading is to understand how fossils provide evidence about past environments.

Look Out For:

- How fossils are formed over time
- Examples of fossils found in Texas
- How fossils give clues about past environments



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Texas has not always looked the same. Long ago, a shallow sea covered parts of Texas. In that water, many **living** plants and animals lived and grew. These **organisms** left behind clues for scientists to study.

When a plant or animal died, it sometimes sank into mud. Over time, layers of mud and sand covered it. The soft parts of the **organism** broke down, but the harder parts or shapes stayed. Sometimes, an **imprint** of the **organism** was left in the mud. Over many years, the layers turned into rock and formed **fossils**.

Later, the **environment** changed. Swampy forests covered Texas. Scientists have found **fossils** and **imprints** of reptiles, turtles, and tree ferns from that time.

Different **fossils** can show what the **environment** was like. Even though the **living organism** is gone, these clues help scientists learn about the past.

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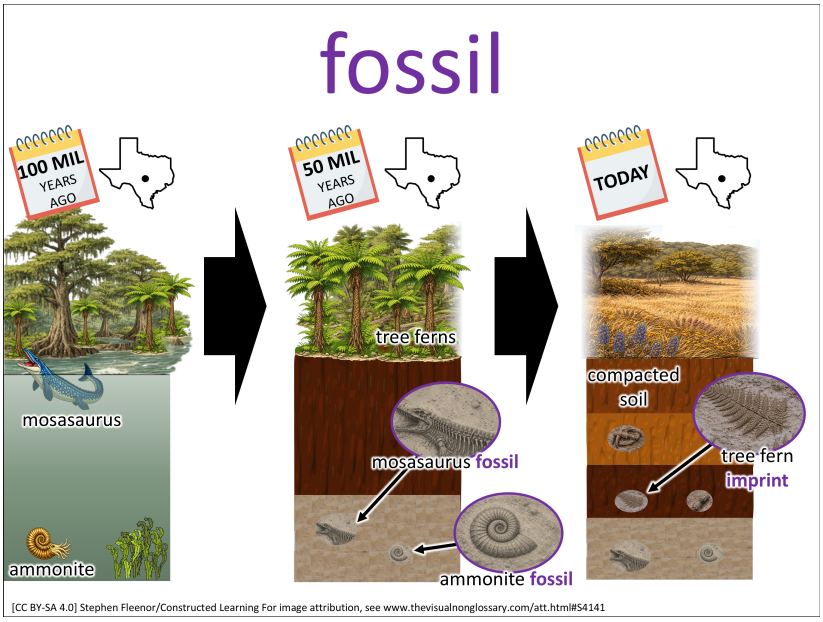
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Texas has not always been covered in grasslands like it is today. About 100 million years ago, a shallow sea covered parts of Texas. In that water, many **living** plants and animals grew, moved, and survived. How do we know? These **organisms** left behind clues that scientists study today.

When an animal or plant died, its remains sometimes sank to the bottom of the water. Over time, layers of mud and sand covered the remains. As more layers built up, the soft parts of the **organism** broke down, but harder parts or shapes stayed. In some cases, an **imprint** of the **organism** was left behind in the sediment. Over many years, the layers hardened into rock, preserving what was once part of a **living** thing and creating **fossils**.

Eventually, the **environment** changed, and swampy forests covered Texas. **Fossils** and **imprints** of crocodile-like reptiles, turtles, and tree ferns have been found from this time.

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Different types of **fossils** can show whether the **environment** was wet, dry, warm, or full of plants. Even though the original **living organism** is gone, these clues remain. They help scientists understand how **organisms** lived and what their **environments** were like long ago.

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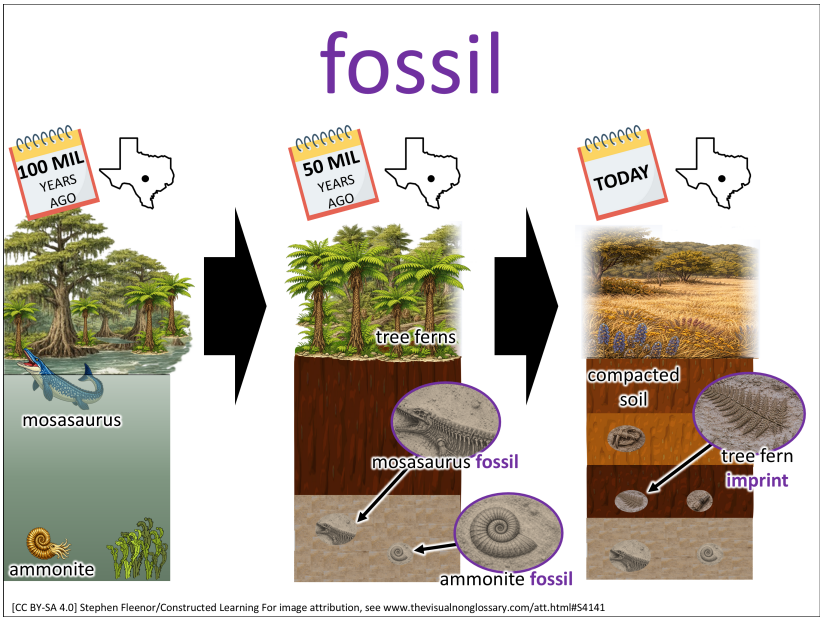
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Texas has not always had the same **environment** it has today. Around 100 million years ago, a shallow sea covered parts of the region. In this setting, many **living** plants and animals thrived. These **organisms** left behind important evidence that scientists still study.

When a plant or animal died, its remains often settled into layers of sediment. Over time, more layers of mud and sand built up on top. As pressure increased, the soft parts of the **organism** decayed, while harder parts or shapes remained. In some cases, an **imprint** of the **organism** formed in the sediment. Over long periods of time, these layers hardened into rock, creating **fossils** that preserve evidence of past life.

As time passed, the **environment** in Texas changed. Swampy forests replaced the shallow sea. Scientists have discovered **fossils** and **imprints** of crocodile-like reptiles, turtles, and large tree ferns from this period.

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By studying different types of **fossils**, scientists can infer details about past **environments**. Even though the original **living organism** no longer exists, these preserved clues provide valuable information about how organisms lived and how their environments changed over time.

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