jacaranda
jaconline.com.au

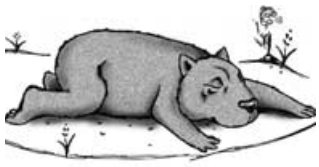
VISUAL/SPATIAL

Discovery Worksheets

Fossil dig

Fossils found at Bluff Downs and Riversleigh in northern Queensland and at Naracoorte in South Australia are helping researchers to find out more about the ancient mammals that once lived in Australia. These included giant wombats, strange-looking koala-type creatures, bandicoots and kangaroos.

Using the illustrations on the right as a guide, complete the panels and captions below to show how a giant wombat living 200 000 years ago turns into a fossil.



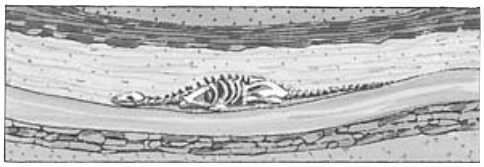
(a) When it dies, the flesh of the wombat will rot away or be eaten by other animals. In time, all that remains is the ..... .

(b) As more time passes, the skeleton becomes covered with layers of ..... or .....

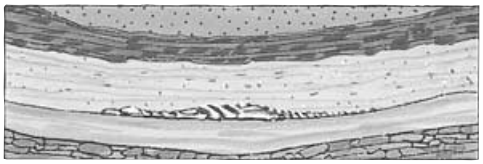
(c) The bones are gradually replaced by minerals. This process is called .....

(d) Earth movements and erosion may bring the fossilised skeleton closer to the surface. ..... by wind and water expose some or all of the fossilised bones.

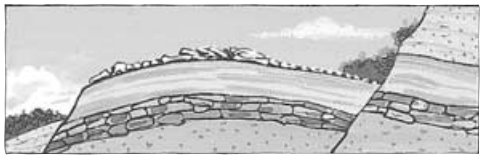
➤ At the bottom of a lake or swamp, the dinosaur's dead body is safe from large meat-eating scavengers. The flesh may be eaten by fish or it rots away.



➤ Over time, sand or silt cover the dinosaur's skeleton — now all that remains.



➤ The skeleton becomes flattened as more and more layers of sediment build up above it. The bones are gradually replaced by minerals which are harder than the rocks around them. This process is called fossilisation.



➤ After many millions of years, movements in the Earth's crust may bring the fossilised skeleton close to the surface. Erosion by wind or water exposes the fossilised bones.

Discovery tools

Atlas of Discovery, pp. 18–19, 44–45;
coloured pencils