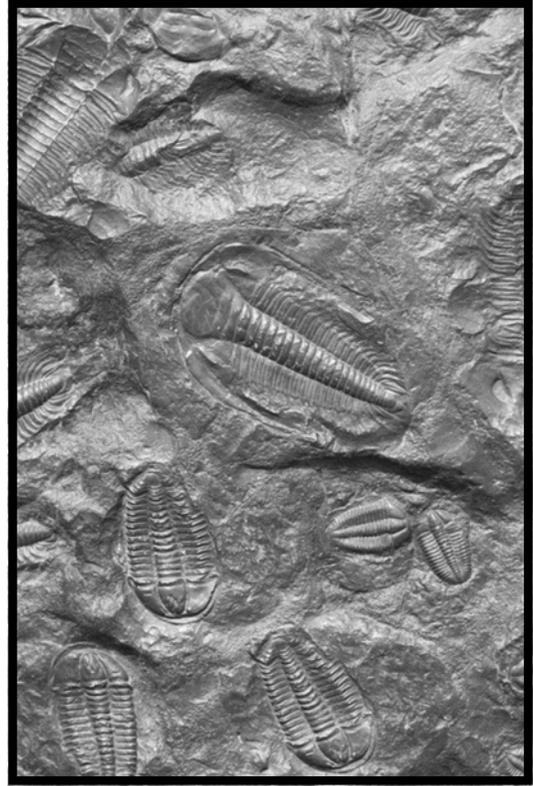


Fossils

Fossils of plant or animal life from long ago are found in many rocks. For fossils to happen, the plant or animal would have died long ago and got washed away by one of the weathering processes. It eventually got covered with mud and rock particles. The soft part of the body of the plant or animal decayed and all that remained was the hard part of the skeleton. Over thousands and thousands of years, layers of mud and rocks and dead plants piled up. Then they compacted together and cemented to form rock. The hard parts of plants and the skeletons of animals left the imprint in the rock. Earth is always moving and as the earth's crust shifted, the fossils surfaced. The fossils that have been found, tell us about life on earth long ago. Geologists know how old the fossils are due to how low in the sedimentary rock the fossil was discovered. The lower in the layer means, the older the rock is, the higher in the layer means the fossil is more recent. Most fossils are small shellfish, snails, trilobites, clams and plant life. However, large imprints of dinosaurs and footprints have also been discovered. If you are lucky enough to stumble on something like this, you should call the museum as the professionals will carefully uncover the large fossil.



QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the fossils in the picture and decide if they might have been plant or animal life from long ago. Explain your answer.
2. Where would earth's oldest fossils be found?
3. Define what a fossil is using your own words.
4. How do fossils form?
5. What can we learn from fossils?
6. What should you do if you come across a really interesting and large fossil?
Why?