

Fossils in the rock record

The age of a fossil can be found by looking at the age of the rock layer it was discovered in. In this activity you will make a sequence of jelly layers (representing rock) which contain sweets (fossils) inside a jar.

You will need:

- A large glass jar.
- Different colours of make your own jelly cubes or gelatin.
- Sweets that look like animals or are interesting shapes (e.g. Gummy Worms, Foam Shrimps, Jelly Babies, Haribo) .

Instructions

1. Make your first colour of jelly as per the packet instructions. You want to make each layer about 2-4cm so how much you need to make will depend on the size of your jar.
2. Pour the first layer of jelly into the jar and mix in one type of sweet. This is your first rock and fossil layer.
3. Leave the jelly to set in the fridge (you might need to leave overnight).
4. Make your next colour of jelly and mix in a different type of sweet. Gently pour this over the first set layer of jelly in the jar and put back in the fridge to set.
5. Continue making layers of different coloured jelly and sweets until your jar is full!

The result



You will now have a jar with different layers of jelly and sweets like in the drawing above.

The jelly at the bottom of the jar is the oldest, whilst the most recent layer of jelly is at the top. This is also true for the sweets inside each layer.

The same idea can be related to fossils inside rock. This can tell us about what kinds of animals or plants lived in each time period in the history of our Earth.