

How fossils are formed



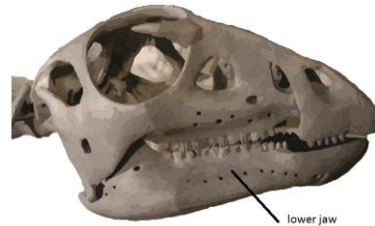
Links to Dinosaur Dreaming Site:

A whole range of different dinosaurs have been found at the dig site but most have been identified from isolated bones. The environment here was a vast flood plain crossed by fast-flowing river channels. This has meant the bones from skeletons have been scattered and this has made it unlikely to find complete skeletons.

In 1996 the jaw bone of a small plant-eating dinosaur was discovered at the Dinosaur Dreaming dig site. It is the most complete dinosaur jaw that has been found in Victoria and was named *Qantassaurus intrepidus*.



Qantassaurus intrepidus jaw found in 1996



Skull of small ornithomimid dinosaur

The sequence of events that would have resulted in the finding of this fossil are listed below. Cut out each event and paste in the correct order in which the fossil formation would have occurred.

Links to curriculum:

This activity encourages students to think about how fossils are formed and how finds can be interpreted. The activity links with the Thinking and Science domains of VELS.

A fossicker or palaeontologist discovers the fossilized jaw bone embedded in sandstone.	The dinosaur skeleton is washed into a river channel during a flooding event.
The jaw bone is separated from the rest of the skeleton.	The sandstone around the fossilized jawbone is gradually worn away by rain, wind and movement of the water.
The sediments settle around the jaw bone and gradually turn into sandstone as the result of pressure over millions of years	The skeleton is broken up by the fast-flowing river and the bones are carried along in the water.
The flesh, skin and internal organs of the dinosaur decay, leaving only the skeleton.	The dinosaur's jaw bone becomes imbedded in the muddy river bed and is gradually covered by more sediments.

Extension activity: Draw cartoon-like illustrations next to each description above to show what happened for each stage of the fossil formation.