



Knowledge is NCAH!

## Palaeontology

### HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED:

- HOW SCIENTISTS KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT DINOSAURS?
- WHY AFRICA IS KNOWN AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF HUMANKIND?



**DEMONSTRATION:**  
MAKE AN IMAGINARY  
PREHISTORIC CREATURE  
OUT OF RUBBISH

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**  
Various pieces of rubbish (e.g. bottles,  
tubs, tins, empty toilet rolls, boxes, etc.),  
glue, sticky tape, scissors, paint (optional)



### What to do:

- 1 Make an imaginary "profile" for your creature by answering these questions:
  - a) Where in South Africa did your creature live? What was the climate like?
  - b) Did it spend most of its time on land, in water or in the sky?
  - c) What did it eat? Was it a herbivore, carnivore or omnivore?
- 2 Using the profile, design your creature and do a rough sketch if necessary. (E.g. If it ate meat, what would its teeth have looked like?)
- 3 Use the rubbish you have found to build your creature. You could paint it too.



## What is happening?

You used your creature's imaginary profile to determine its body structure. Palaeontologists work the other way round! They study structural remains of an ancient creature to determine what its "profile" was. They're like detectives examining clues left behind in fossilised bones and teeth! Woah!



BUT BESIDES  
DINOSAURS  
BEING REALLY  
COOL, WHY DO  
PALAEOLOGISTS  
DO THIS???

Well, it helps us understand how life on earth has developed and how climate change and other disasters have affected our planet. And these days it's also important because it may help us understand the current environmental crisis that global warming and population growth are causing. Awesome, hey?



### CURRICULUM LINKS:

- **Knowledge area:** Diversity, Change and Continuity
- **Themes:** History of life on earth, Human evolution

## CAREERS

BECAUSE SOUTH AFRICA IS SUCH A RICH SITE FOR STUDYING PREHISTORIC LIFE, THERE ARE MANY CAREER OPTIONS! PALAEOLOGISTS, PALAEOBIOLOGISTS, GEOLOGISTS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS ALL STUDY ASPECTS OF EARTH'S HISTORY – FROM EXTINCT ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE TO ROCK FORMATION TO HUMAN SOCIETIES!



## SAY HELLO TO YOUR LONG-LOST RELATIVE!



South Africa is a leader in Palaeontology because we have such a rich, unique fossil history. Did you know that some of the oldest evidence of life was found here? Not to mention some of our oldest relatives...

### Meet *Australopithecus sediba*!



Cranium of the juvenile male nicknamed "Karabo"  
[www.wits.ac.za/bpi/](http://www.wits.ac.za/bpi/)

He is a recently discovered species of human ancestor and is probably about 1,98 million years old! He was found with 5 others in Malapa Cave at the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site in Gauteng, from 2008 onwards.

He and his friends are super important to the world because they are providing groundbreaking information about our origins!

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